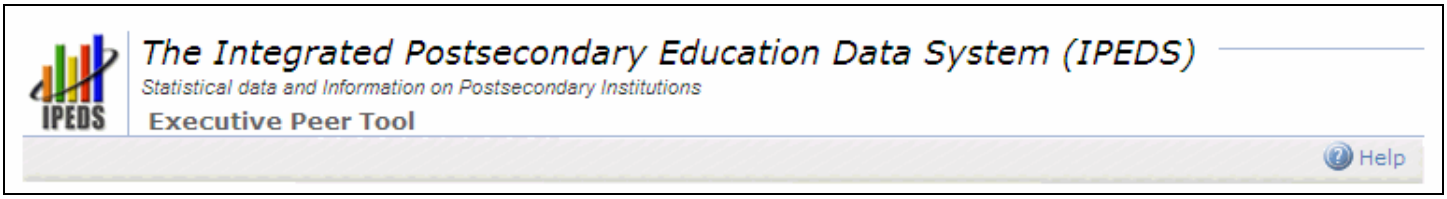


National Center for Education Statistics

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

Using the IPEDS Executive Peer Tool ExPT 2008

Help Documentation

http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas/expt

Table of Contents

Overview/Welcome Screen 4
- **General** 4
- **Features** 4

Focus Institution Selection 5
- **Overview** 5
- **Search tips and examples** 5
  - *No matches* 5
  - *"College" or "University"* 5
  - *Underlined text in search results* 6
  - *"Searching…" message* 6
  - *"Duplicate" institution names* 7
  - *Search results do not match entered text* 7

Site Navigation 8
- **Overview** 8
- **Focus Institution** 8
- **Start Over** 8
- **Save** 9
  - *Comparison Group* 9
- **Data Feedback Reports** 10
  - *Options: Step 1* 10
  - *Options: Steps 2 & 3* 10
- **Help** 11

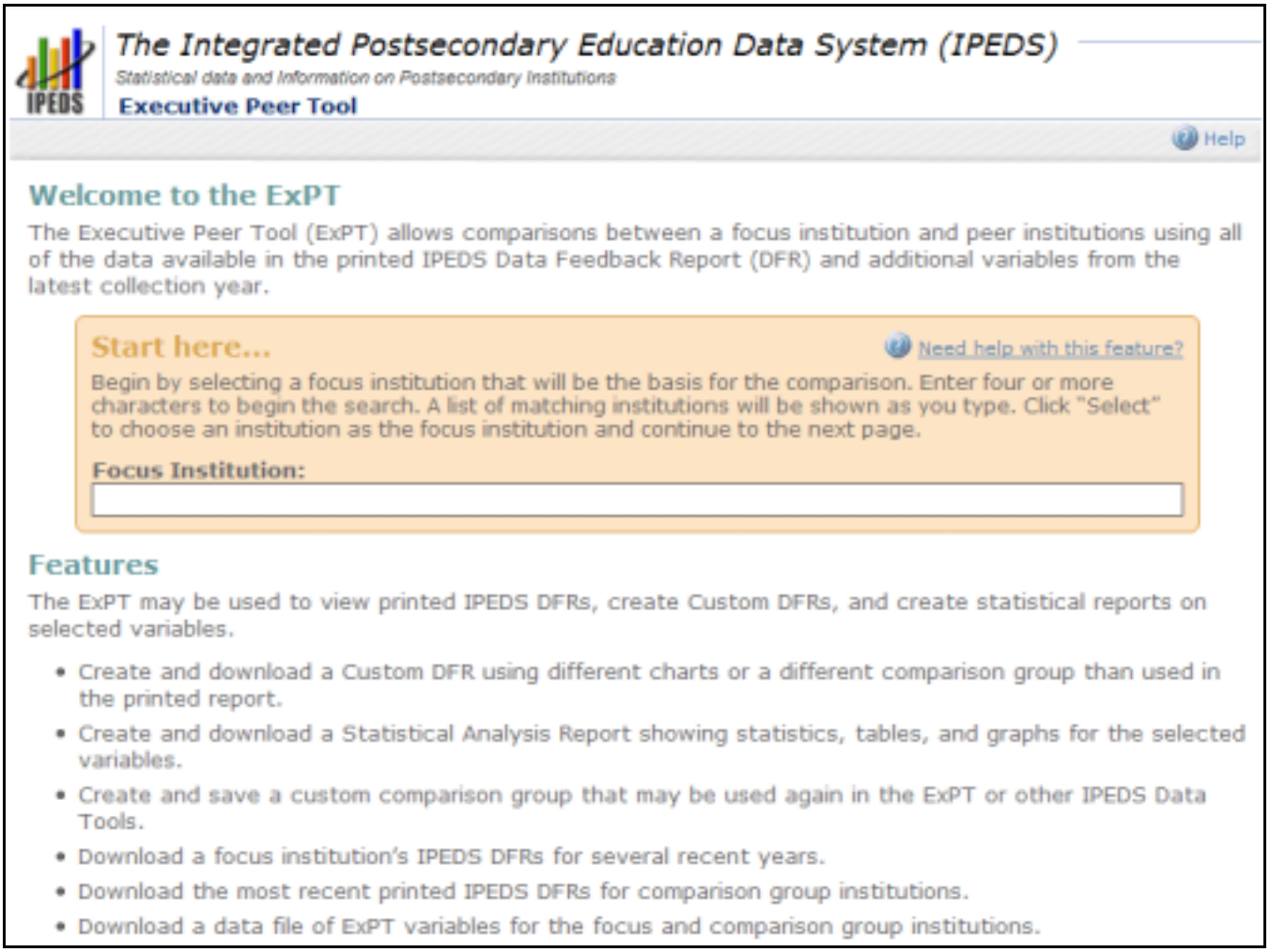
Step 1: Comparison Group Selection 12
- **Overview** 12
- **Method of Selection** 12
  - *Overview* 12
  - *Use institution-defined custom comparison group* 13
  - *Use automatically-generated comparison group* 13
  - *Upload comparison group* 13
  - *Add institutions by name* 13
  - *Add institutions by criteria* 13
- **Use automatically-generated comparison group** 14
  - *Overview* 14
  - *Results Page* 14
- **Use institution-defined custom comparison group** 15
  - *Overview* 15
  - *Results Page* 15
- **Upload comparison group** 16
  - *Overview* 16
  - *Upload Saved File* 16
  - *Retrieve Saved Group* 18
  - *Results Page – up to 100 institutions* 19
  - *Results Page – more than 100 institutions* 20
- **Add institutions by name** 21
  - *Overview* 21
  - *Add one institution to the comparison group* 22
  - *Add more than one institution to the comparison group* 24
  - *100-institution maximum* 26
  - *Remove a school* 27
- **Add institutions by criteria** 29
  - *Overview* 29
  - *Focus institution criteria* 29
  - *Comparison Group criteria* 30
  - *Tips* 31
  - *Institution count logic* 32
  - *Results Page* 34

Comparison Group Results Page 35
Overview 35
Institutions box 36
Comparison Group (100 max) box 36
Add additional institutions by name 37
Save comparison group 38
View/Print comparison group 38
Step 2: Variables/DFR Charts 40
Overview 40
Selection 40
Overview 40
Create Statistical Analysis Report 40
Create Custom Data Feedback Report 40
Create Statistical Analysis Report 41
Create Custom Data Feedback Report 42
Step 3: Output 43
Overview 43
Statistical Analysis Report – Statistics Tab 44
Overview 44
Graph 45
Statistical Analysis Report – Data Tab 46
Overview 46
Display All / Enable Paging 47
Custom Data Feedback Report – Charts tab 48
Options 49
Overview 49
Edit variables/DFR charts 49
New comparison group 49
Edit comparison group 49
Start Over 49
Return to IPEDS 49
FAQs 50
Focus Institution Selection 50
Why can't I find my institution? 50
"Custom Comparison Group" 50
What is a "custom comparison group?" 50
Why create a custom comparison group? 50
How do I create a custom comparison group in the ExPT? 51
How do I submit a custom comparison group? 51
Why don't I see my custom comparison group in the ExPT? 51
May I submit more than one comparison group? 51
What's the difference between uploading in the ExPT vs. the Data Collection System? 52
Will using the ExPT permanently change the printed DFR? 52
Data Feedback Reports 52
How do I obtain a copy of my printed Data Feedback Report? 52
Reports 52
Why don't I see a median value for some variables? 52
New Features in ExPT 2008 53

Overview/Welcome Screen

General

The Executive Peer Tool (ExPT) allows comparisons between a focus institution and peer institutions using all of the data available in the printed IPEDS Data Feedback Report (DFR) and additional variables from the latest collection year.



Features

The ExPT may be used to view printed IPEDS DFRs, create Custom DFRs, and create statistical reports on selected variables.

- Create and download a Custom DFR using different charts or a different comparison group than used in the printed report.
- Create and download a Statistical Analysis Report showing statistics, tables, and graphs for the selected variables.
- Create and save a custom comparison group that may be used again in the ExPT or other IPEDS Data Tools.
- Download a focus institution's IPEDS DFRs for several recent years.
- Download the most recent printed IPEDS DFRs for comparison group institutions.
- Download a data file of ExPT variables for the focus and comparison group institutions.

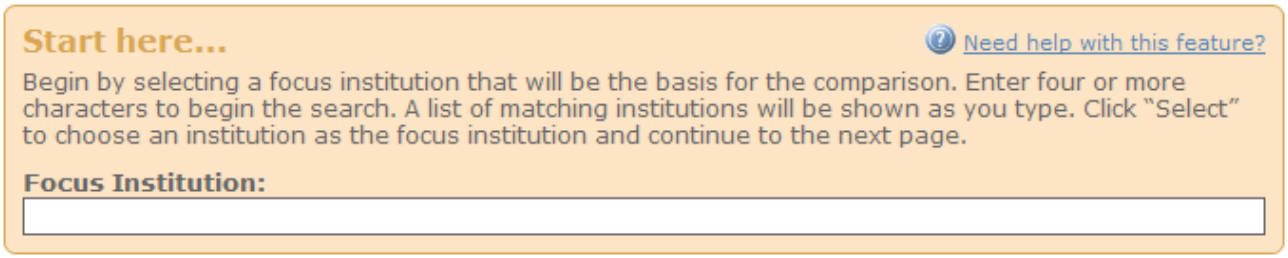
Focus Institution Selection

Overview

A focus institution will be selected on the welcome screen. This institution will be compared to a group of up to 100 institutions in the selected reports.

Start here:

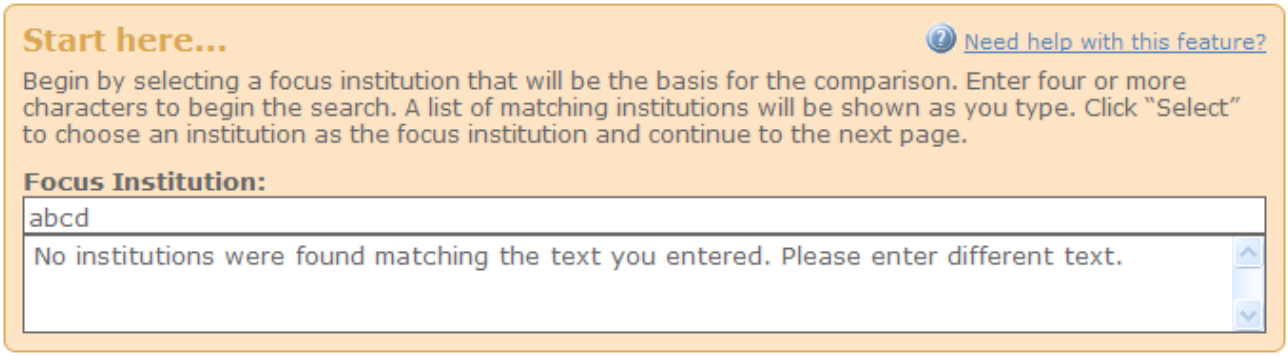
1. Enter four or more characters to begin the search.
2. A list of matching institutions will be shown as you type.
3. Click "Select" to choose an institution as the focus institution and continue to the next page.



Search tips and examples

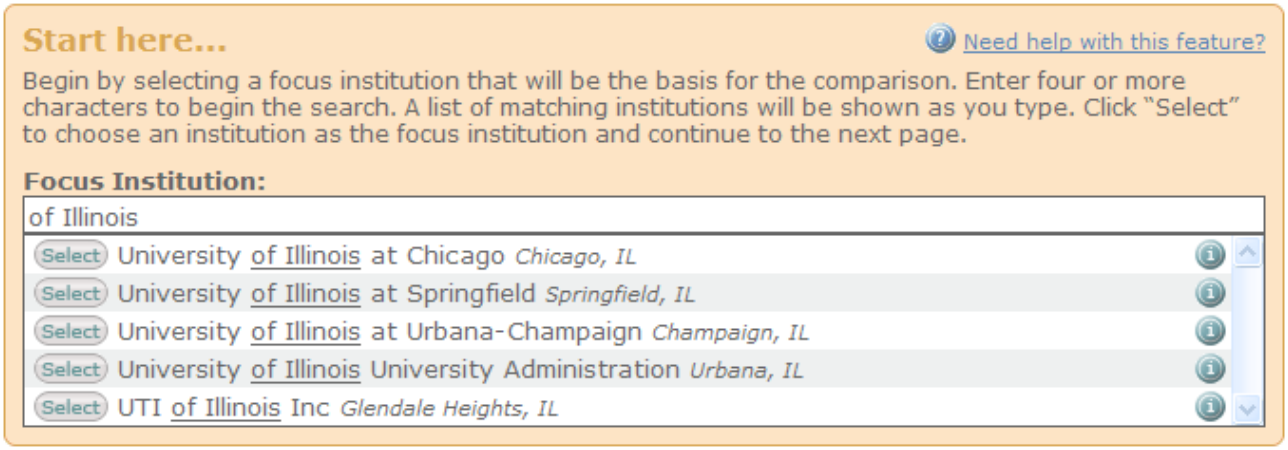
No matches

If there are no institutions matching the entered text, a message will be shown.



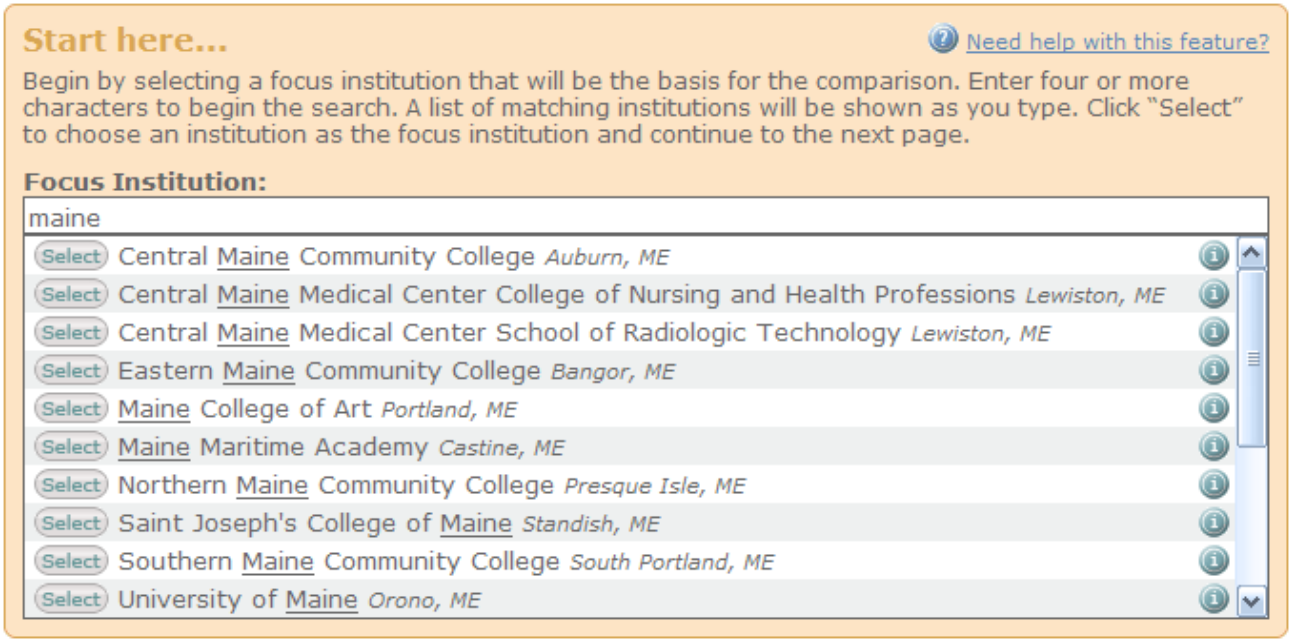
"College" or "University"

For faster search results, omit common words like "College" or "University" in your search.



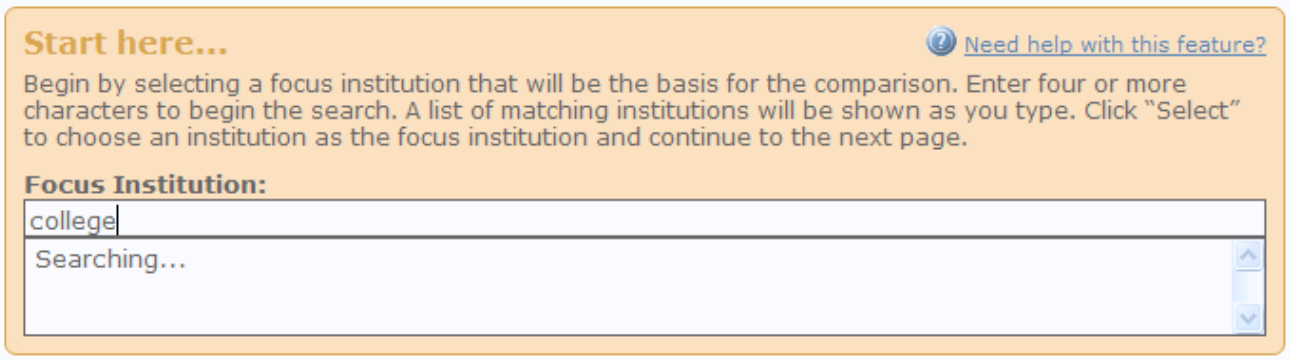
Underlined text in search results

The text matching the entered text will be underlined in the search results.



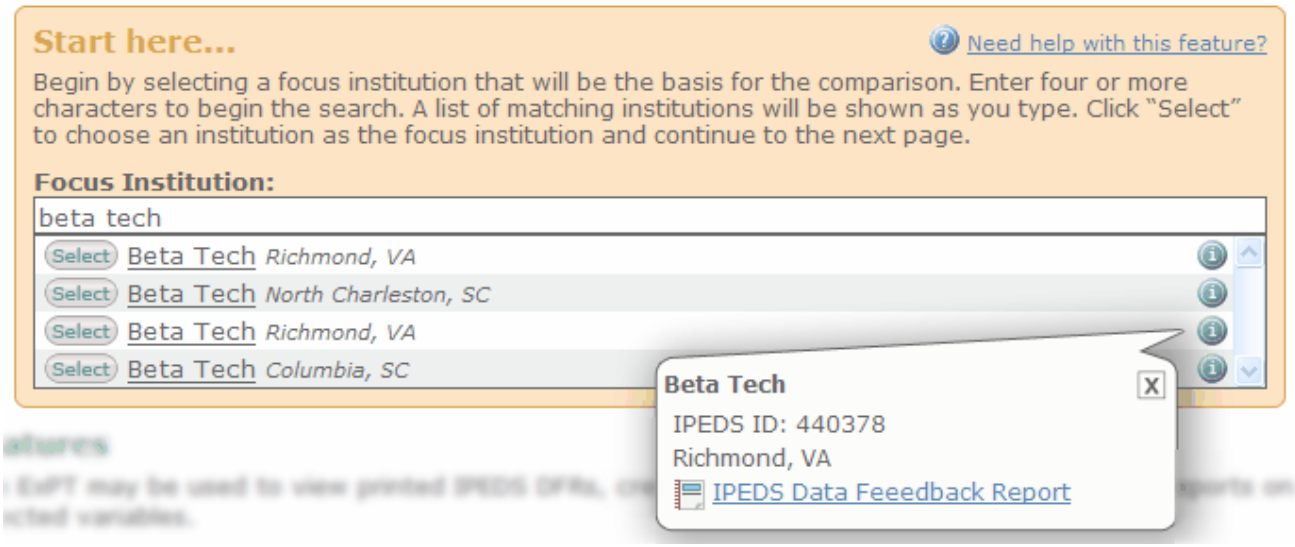
"Searching…" message

Entering text with a large number of matches, such as "college" or "university," will result in a "Searching…" message while the results are compiled. If the searching message appears, wait for your results to be returned. Continue typing to narrow the search or enter different text to begin a new search. As text is typed, there may be a delay in seeing it display on screen if the first several characters initiate a large search.



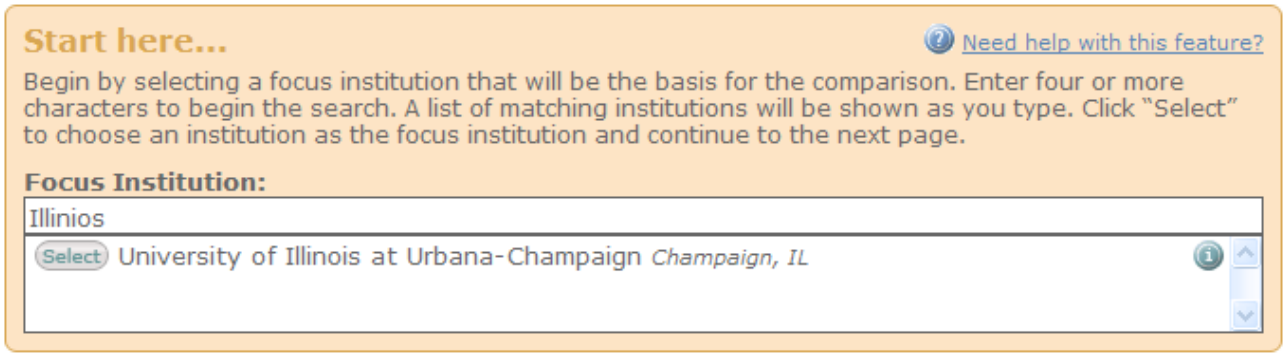
"Duplicate" institution names

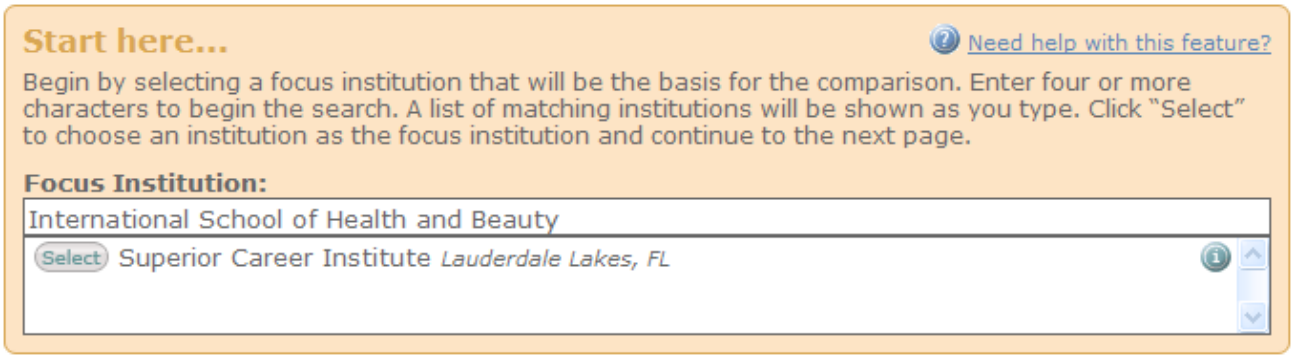
Occasionally, there may appear to be duplicate institutions in the search results. Click the (ⓘ) button to see additional information such as IPEDS ID to identify the specific institution in which are you interested. The current year's printed IPEDS Data Feedback Report is available for download as part of this additional information.



Search results do not match entered text

Occasionally, search results will be returned that do not match the entered text. Variations in institutions' names, abbreviations, and common misspellings are searched by the system, so these may still return results without any underlined text.





Site Navigation

Overview

The ExPT offers standard site navigation showing the focus institution and the following features:

1. Start Over
2. Save
3. Data Feedback Reports
4. Help

Focus Institution

The name of the selected focus institution is shown in the navigation bar. To change the focus institution, you must click "Start Over" from the top navigation bar.

Start Over

To return to the welcome page and select a different focus institution, click "Start Over."

Previous selections of comparison group, variables and/or charts and output types are not retained and must be made again. This is required because the availability of comparison groups, variables, and charts varies with the selection of the focus institution. The purpose of the ExPT is to provide comparison data for a single school, not to create datasets for analysis. The user is referred to other IPEDS tools such as the IPEDS Data Center for this kind of research.

Save

Comparison Group

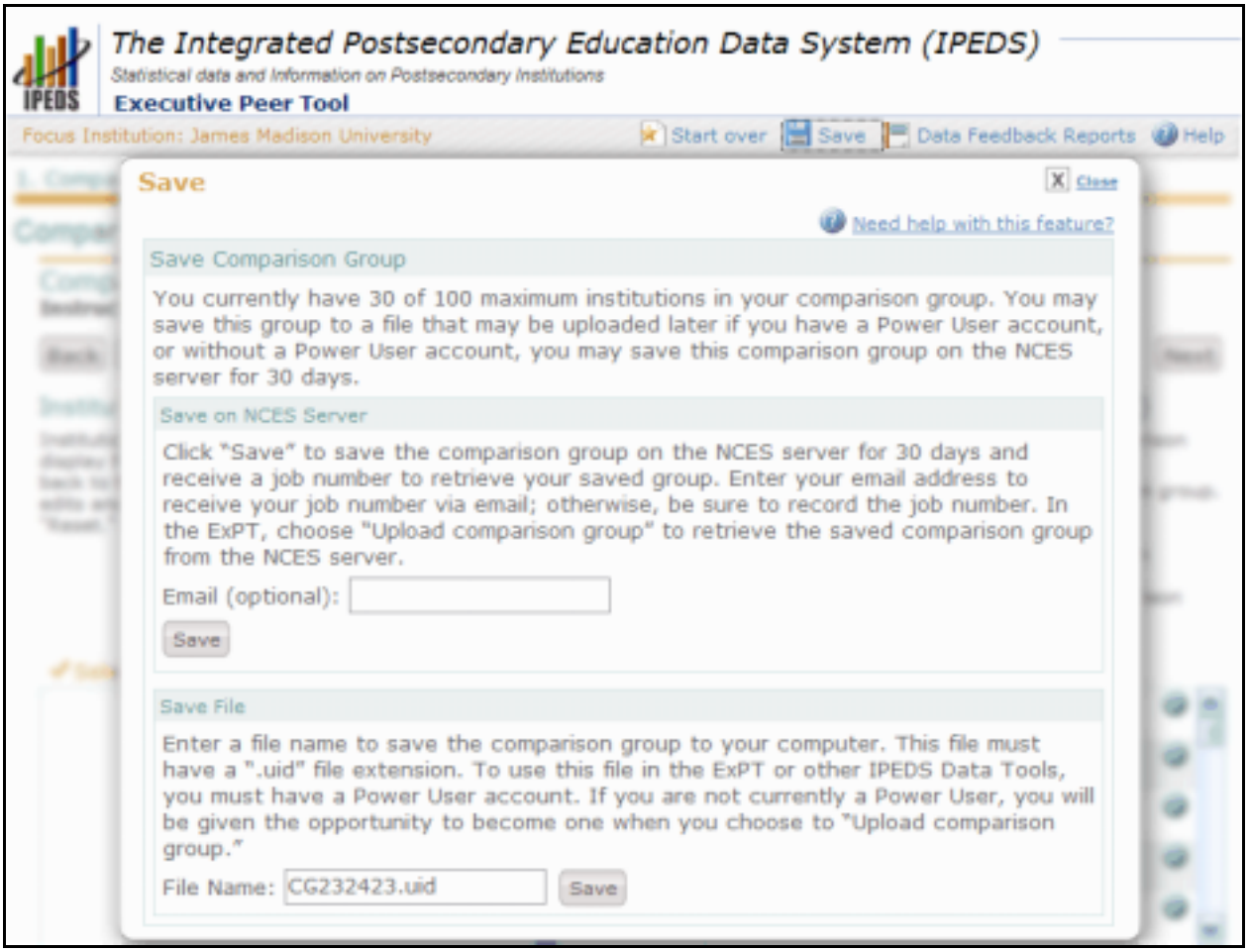
Once you have created a comparison group, you may save it. There are two options for saving a comparison group.

Save on NCES Server

Click "Save" to save the comparison group on the NCES server for 30 days and receive a job number to retrieve your saved group. Enter your email address to receive your job number via email; otherwise, be sure to record the job number. In the ExPT, choose "Upload comparison group" to retrieve the saved comparison group from the NCES server.

Save File

Enter a file name to save the comparison group to a file on your computer. This file will have a ".uid" file extension. To use this file in the ExPT or other IPEDS Data Tools, you must have a Power User account. If you are not currently a Power User, you will be given the opportunity to become one when you choose to "Upload comparison group."

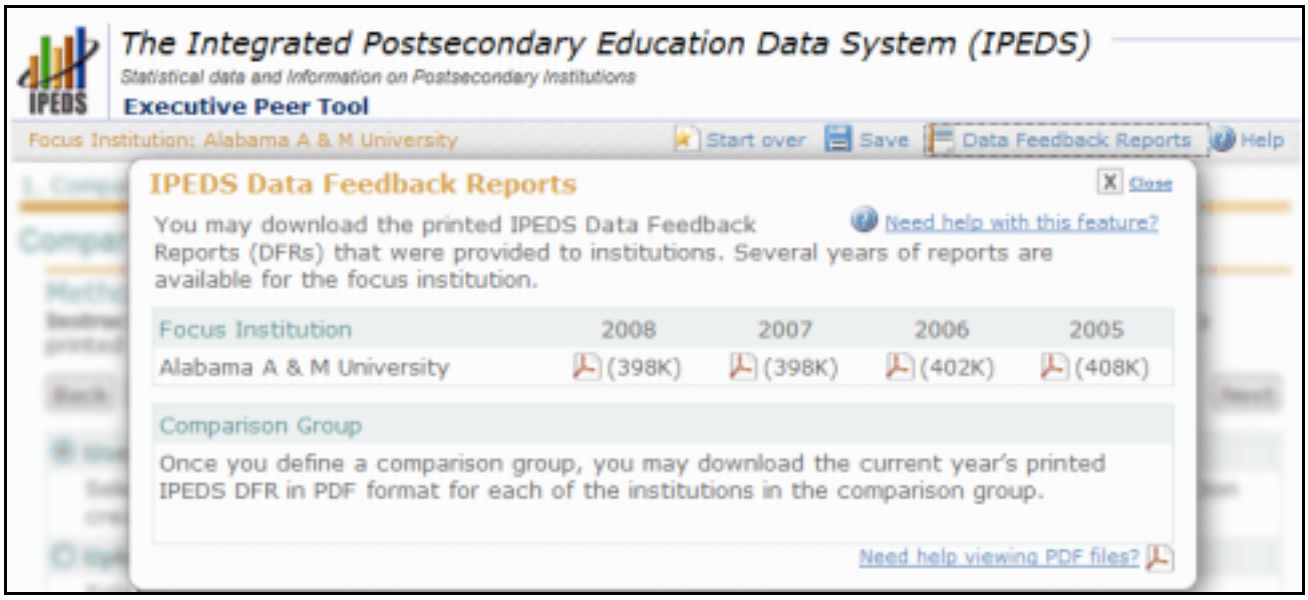


Data Feedback Reports

You may download the printed IPEDS Data Feedback Reports (DFRs) that were provided to institutions. Several years of reports are available for the focus institution.

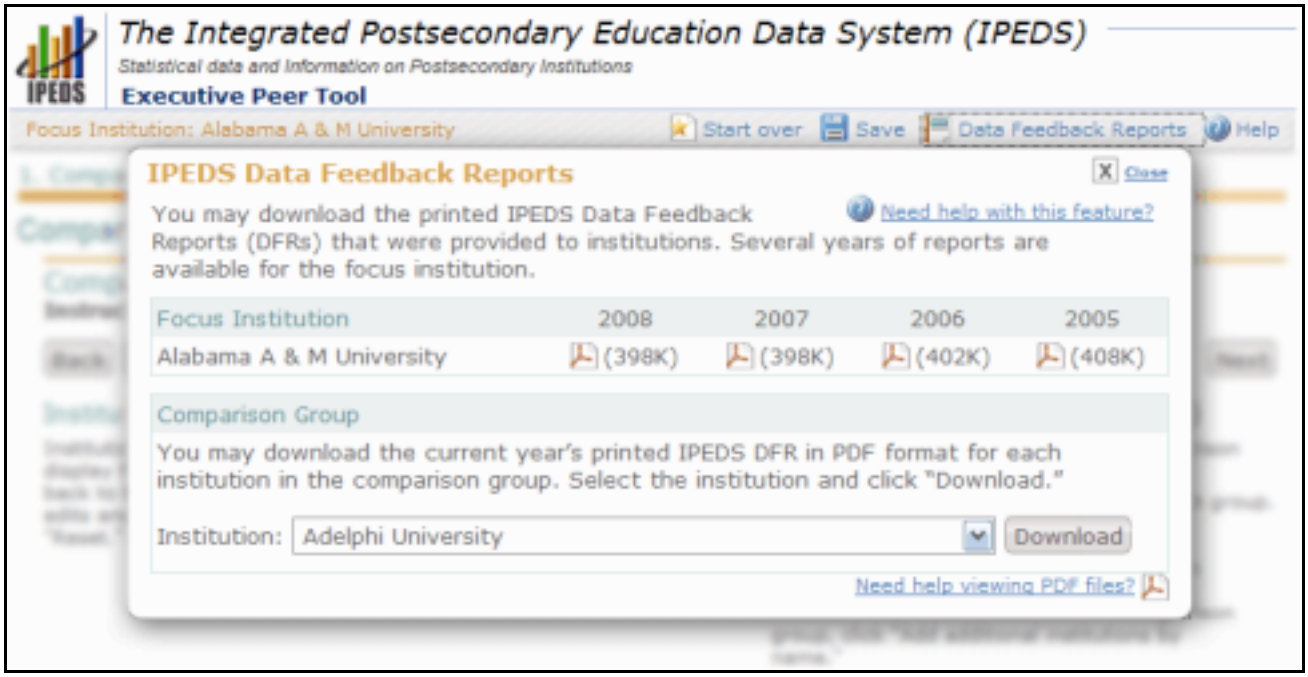
Options: Step 1

Before you define a comparison group, you may download DFRs only for the focus institution.



Options: Steps 2 & 3

After you define a comparison group, in addition to being able to download several years of DFRs for the focus institution, you may also download the current year's printed IPEDS DFR in PDF format for each institution in the comparison group. Select the institution and click "Download."



Help

You may use the context-sensitive help feature from any page of the ExPT. The help material most relevant to the current page will be shown. The on-screen help will open in its own window.

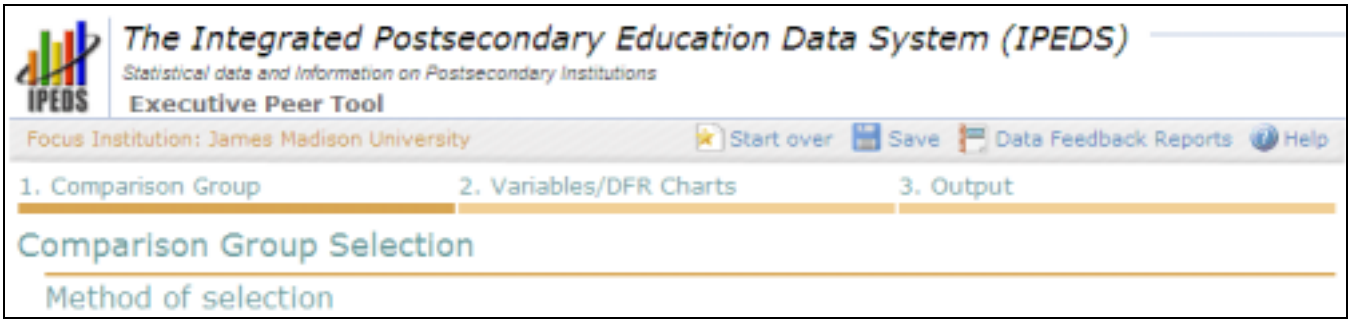
Refer to the table of contents to navigate to topics of interest.

The complete help file is available for download as a PDF file.

Step 1: Comparison Group Selection

Overview

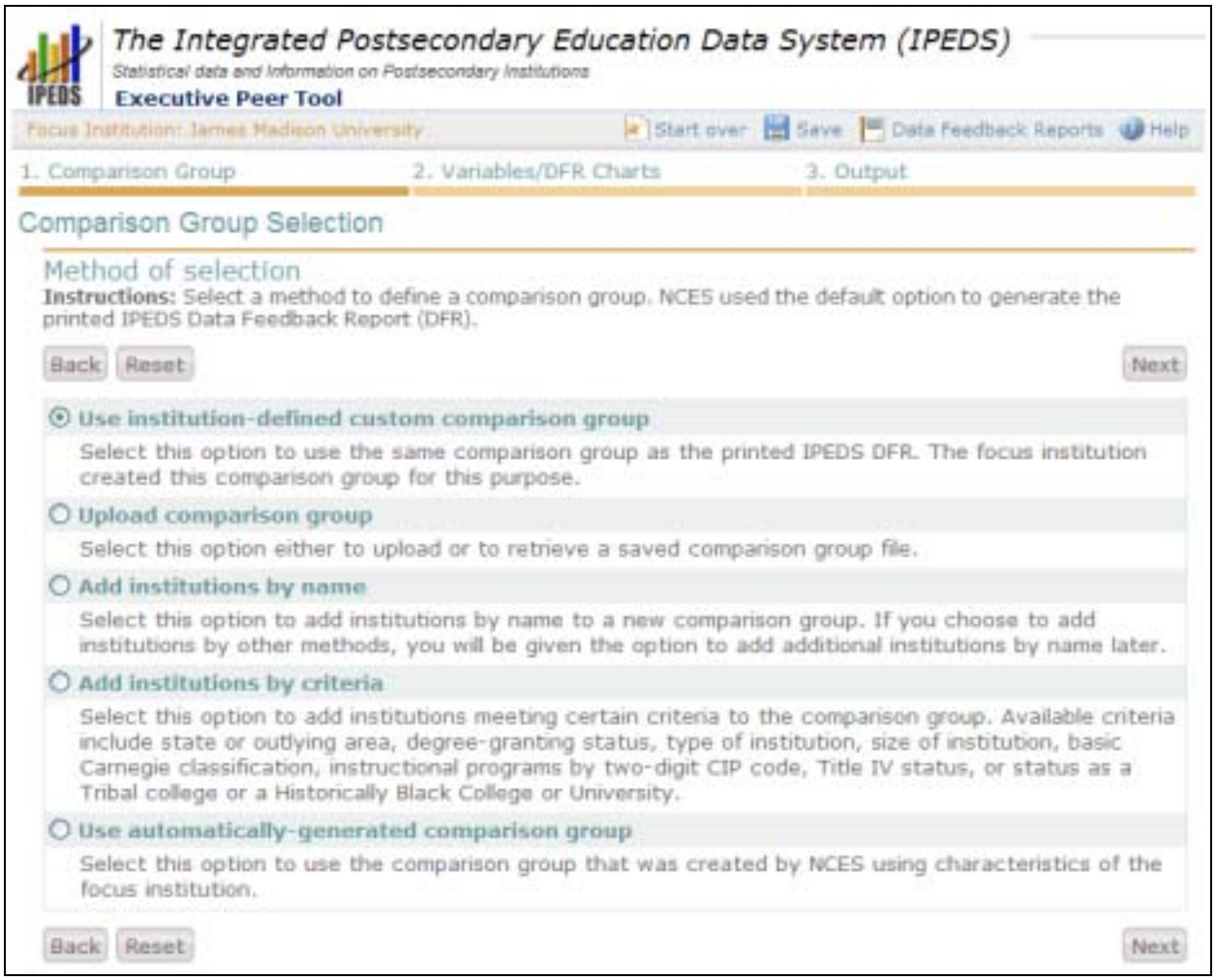
After selecting a focus institution, there are three steps to get results using the Executive Peer Tool (ExPT), beginning with comparison group selection. The step indicator bar shows an abbreviated step name and highlights the current step. Below the indicator bar, the full step name and applicable sub-step name are shown.



Method of Selection

Overview

Select a method to define a comparison group. NCES used the default option to generate the printed IPEDS Data Feedback Report (DFR).



Use institution-defined custom comparison group

Select this option to use the same comparison group as the printed IPEDS DFR. The focus institution created this comparison group as part of the IPEDS collection process.

Use automatically-generated comparison group

Select this option to use the comparison group that was created by NCES using characteristics of the focus institution. This comparison group was used for the printed IPEDS DFR unless a custom comparison group was submitted by the selected focus institution.

Upload comparison group

Select this option either to upload or to retrieve a saved comparison group file.

Add institutions by name

Select this option to add institutions by name to a new comparison group. If you choose to add institutions by other methods, you will be given the option to add additional institutions by name later.

Add institutions by criteria

Select this option to add institutions meeting certain criteria to the comparison group. Available criteria include state or outlying area, degree-granting status, type of institution, size of institution, basic Carnegie classification, instructional programs by two-digit CIP code, Title IV status, or status as a Tribal college or a Historically Black College or University.

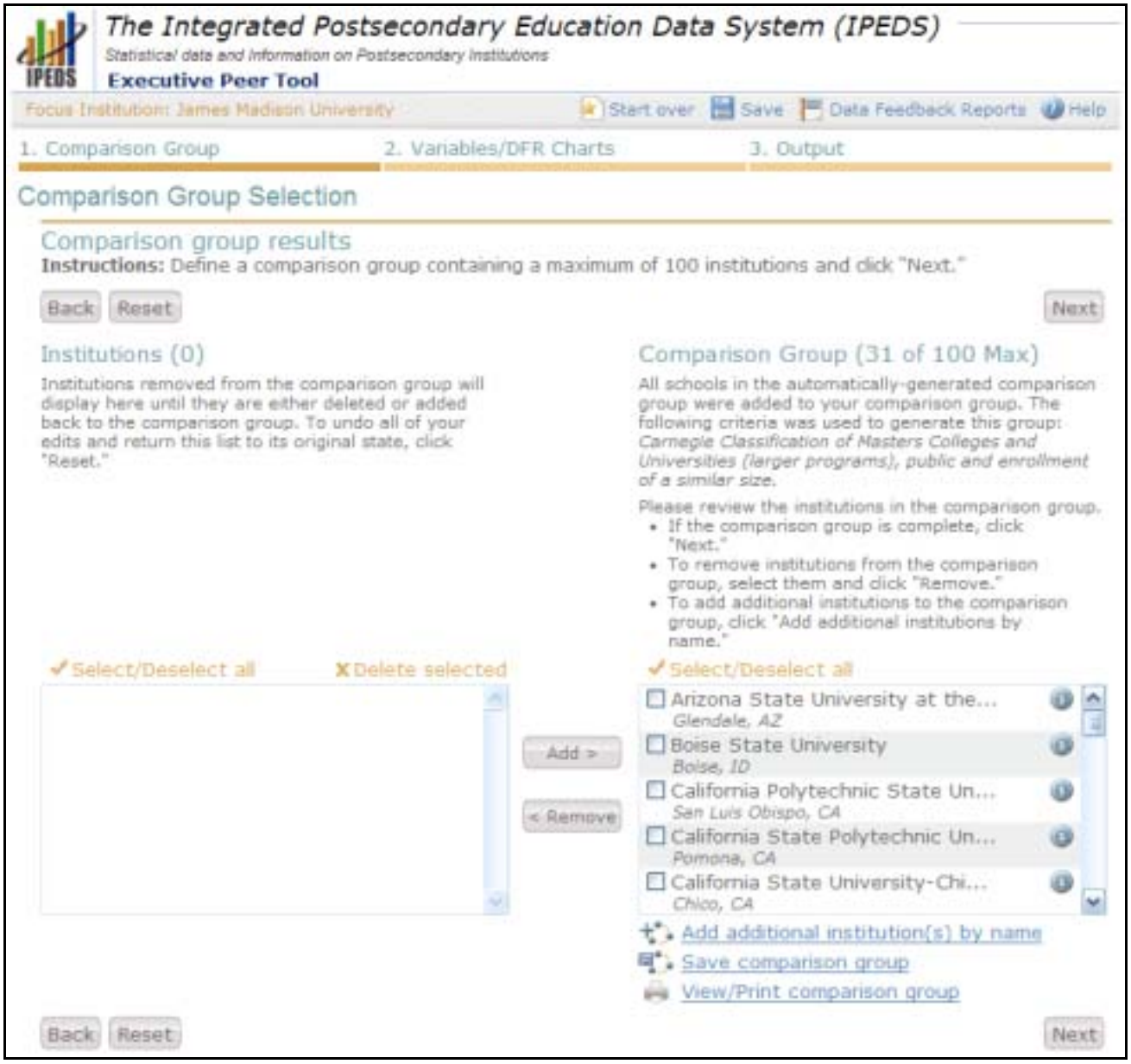
Use automatically-generated comparison group

Overview

Select this option to use the comparison group that was created by NCES using characteristics of the focus institution. This comparison group was used for the printed IPEDS DFR unless a custom comparison group was submitted by the selected focus institution.

Results Page

Selecting the automatically-generated comparison group and clicking "Next" will take you to the "Comparison group results" page. All of the institutions in that group will be displayed in the right-hand "Comparison Group" box. To accept all of the institutions in that group and proceed to the next step, click "Next." You may also remove institutions from the list or add additional institutions by name before proceeding.



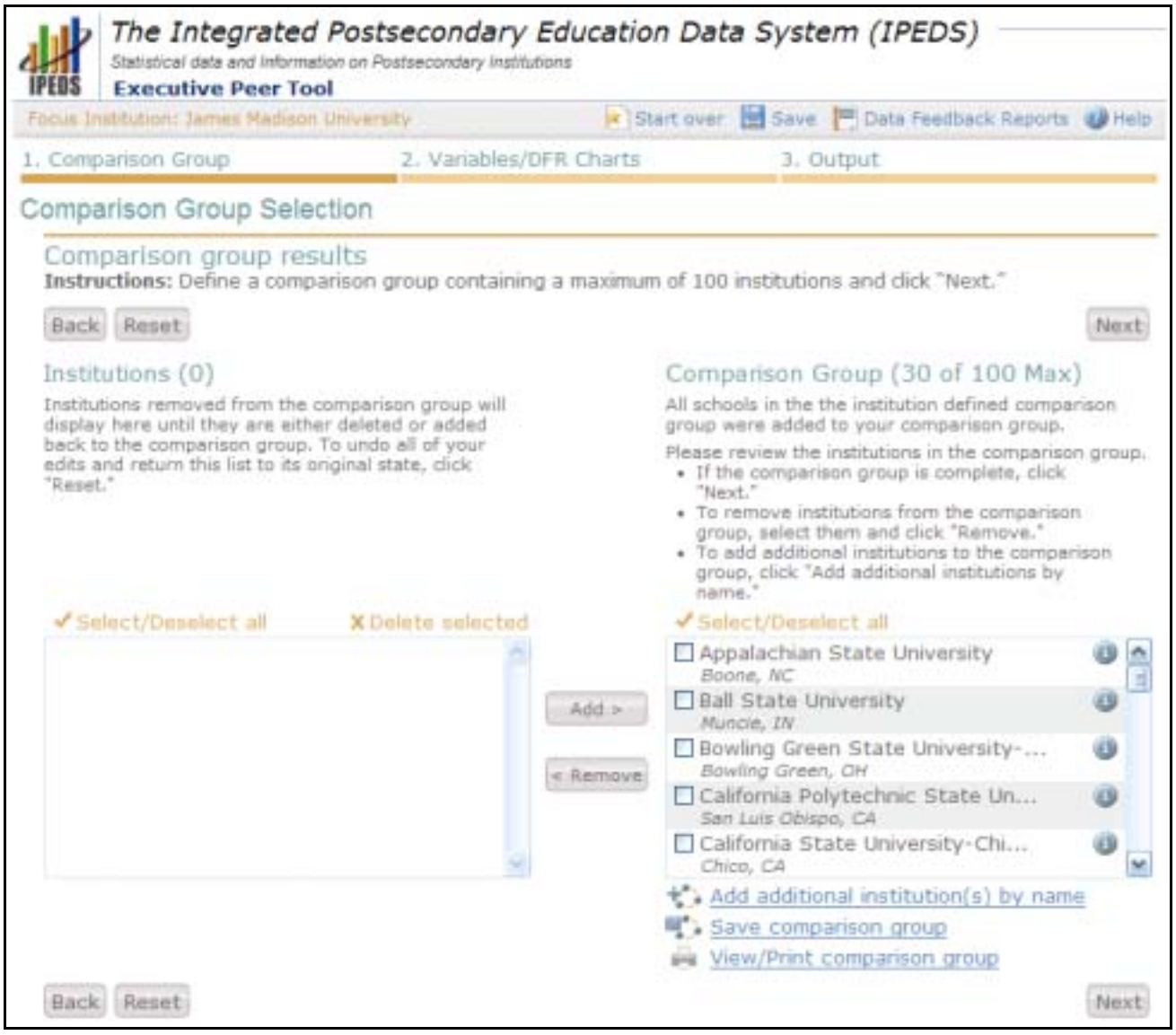
Use institution-defined custom comparison group

Overview

Select this option to use the same comparison group as the printed IPEDS DFR. The focus institution created this comparison group for this purpose.

Results Page

Selecting the institution-defined custom comparison group and clicking "Next" will take you to the "Comparison group results" page. All of the institutions in that group will be displayed in the right-hand "Comparison Group" box. To accept all of the institutions in that group and proceed to the next step, click "Next." You may also remove institutions from the list or add additional institutions by name before proceeding.



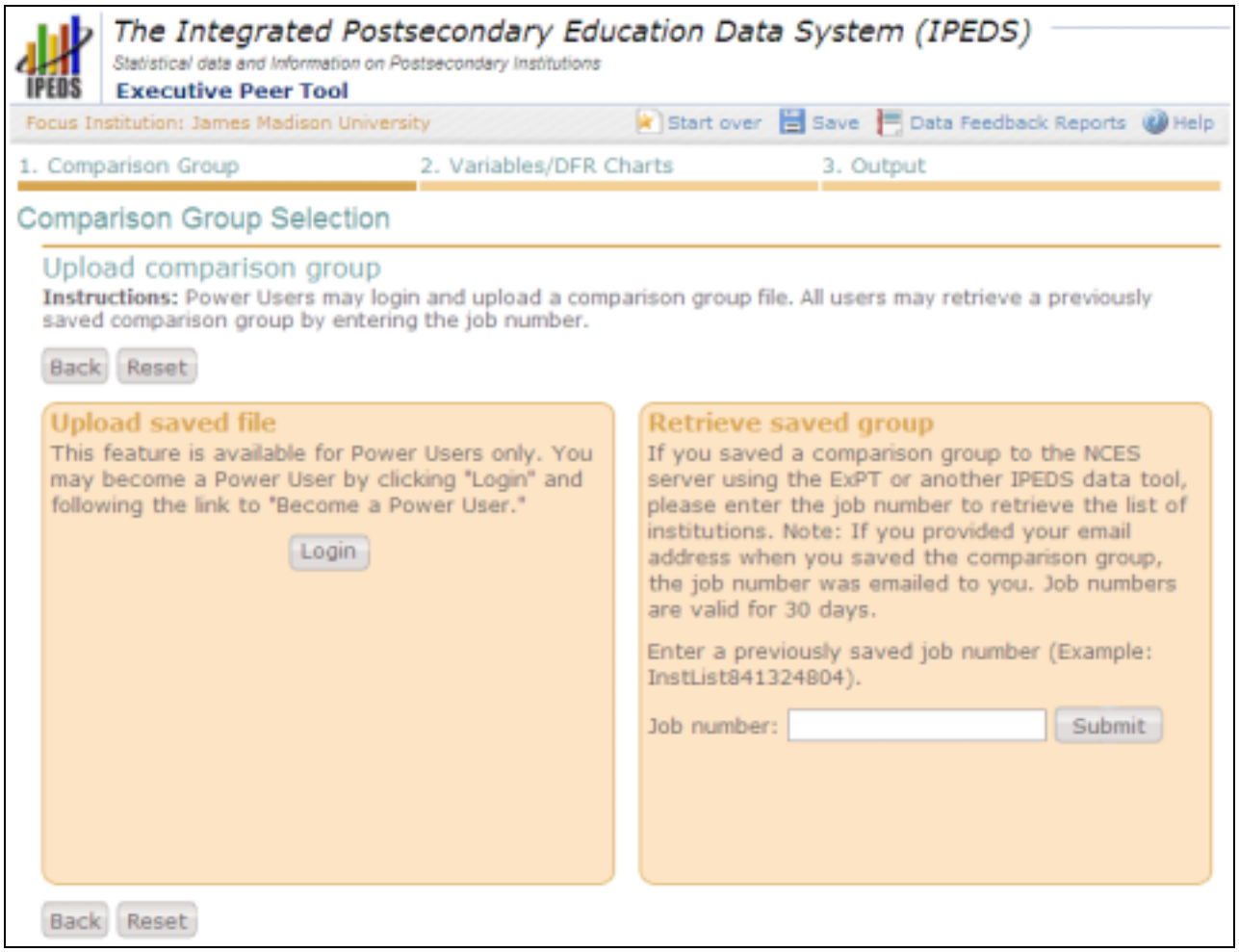
Upload comparison group

Overview

Power Users may login and upload a comparison group file. All users may retrieve a previously saved comparison group by entering the job number.

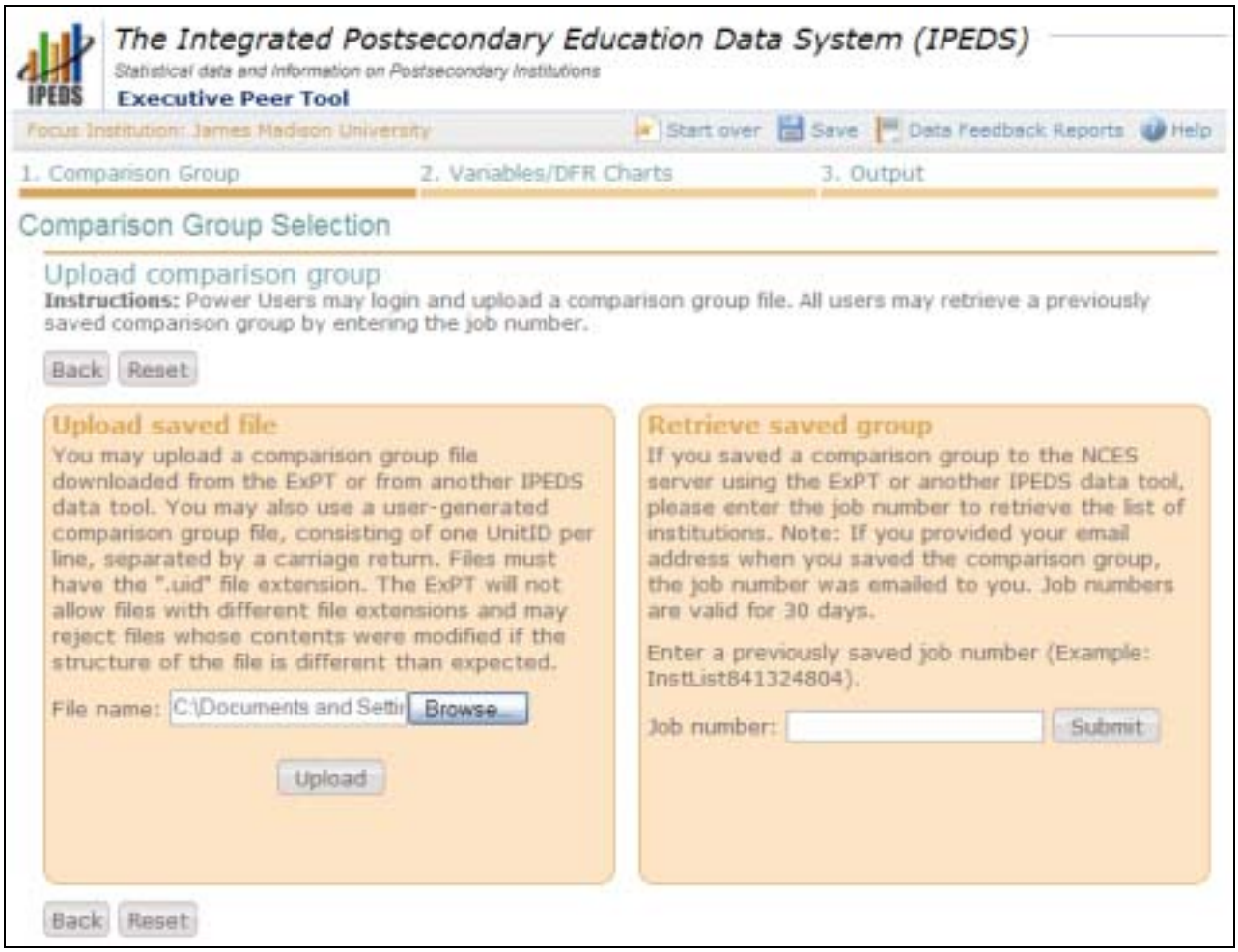
Upload Saved File

This feature is available for Power Users only. You may become a Power User by clicking "Login" and following the link to "Become a Power User."



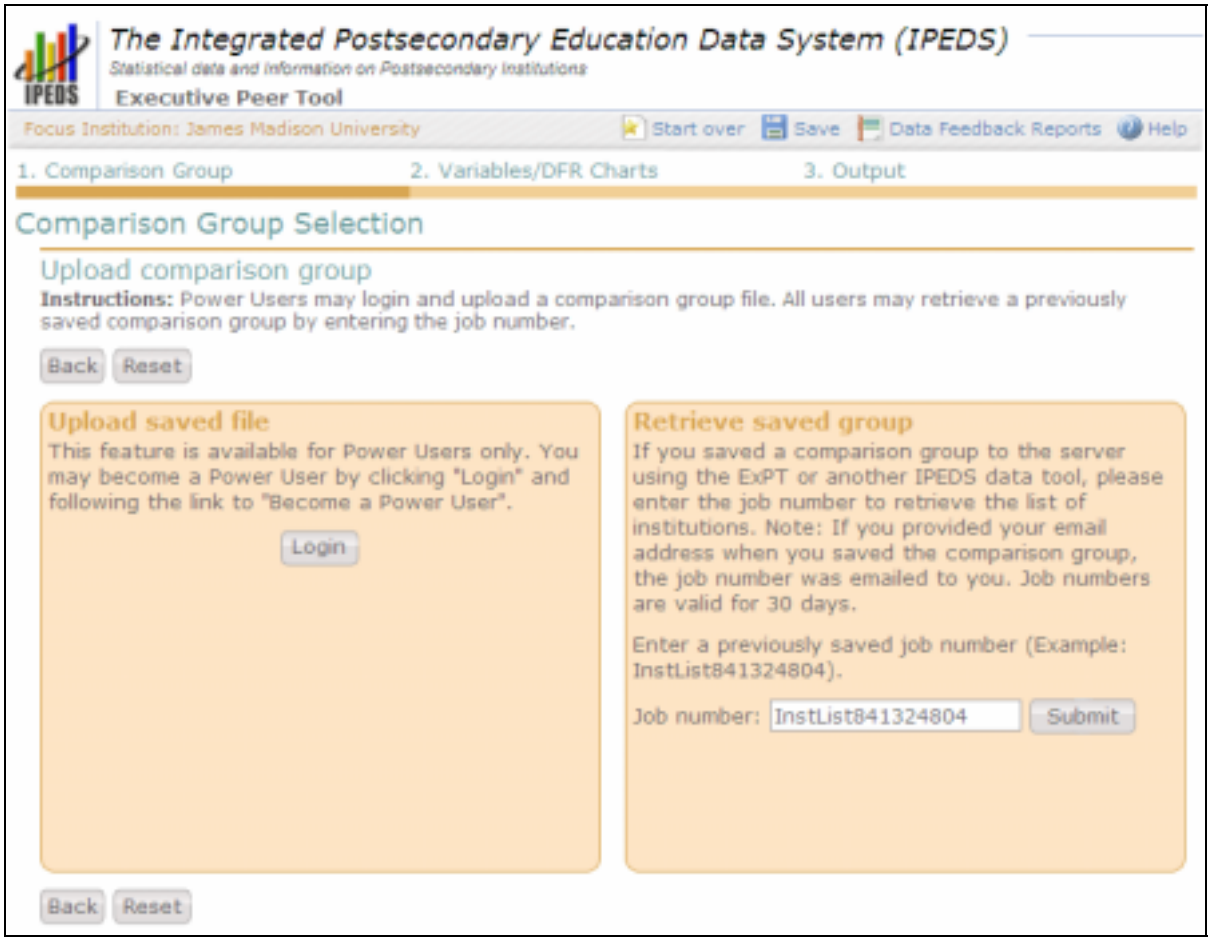
You may upload a comparison group file downloaded from the ExPT or from another IPEDS data tool. You may also use a user-generated comparison group file, consisting of one UnitID per line, separated by a carriage return. Files must have the ".uid" file extension. The ExPT will not allow files with different file extensions and may reject files whose contents were modified if the structure of the file is different than expected.

After logging in as a Power User, select your file and click "Upload."



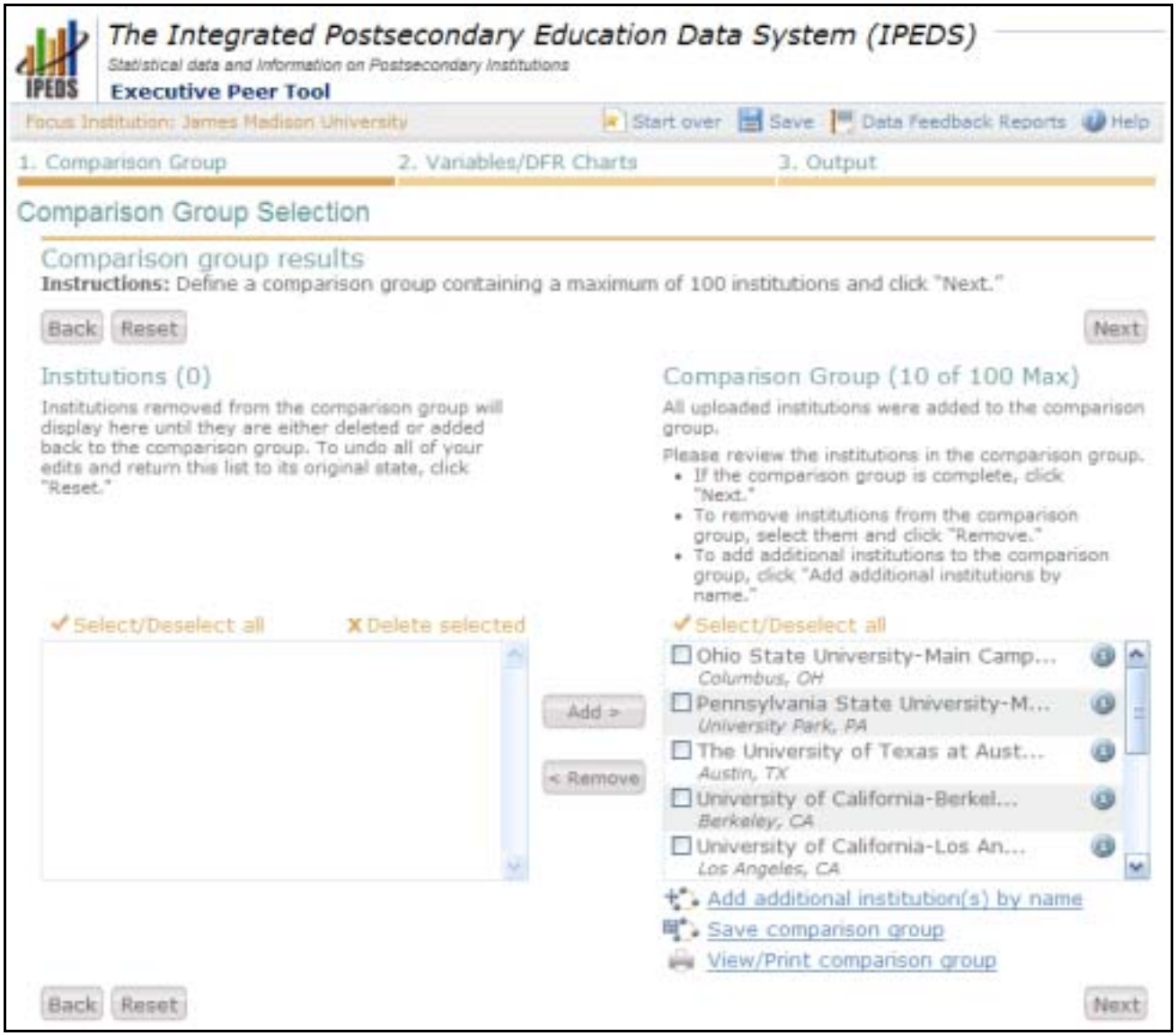
If you saved a comparison group to the NCES server using the ExPT or another IPEDS data tool, please enter the job number to retrieve the list of institutions. Note: If you provided your email address when you saved the comparison group, the job number was emailed to you. Job numbers are valid for 30 days.

Enter a previously saved job number (Example: InstList841324804).

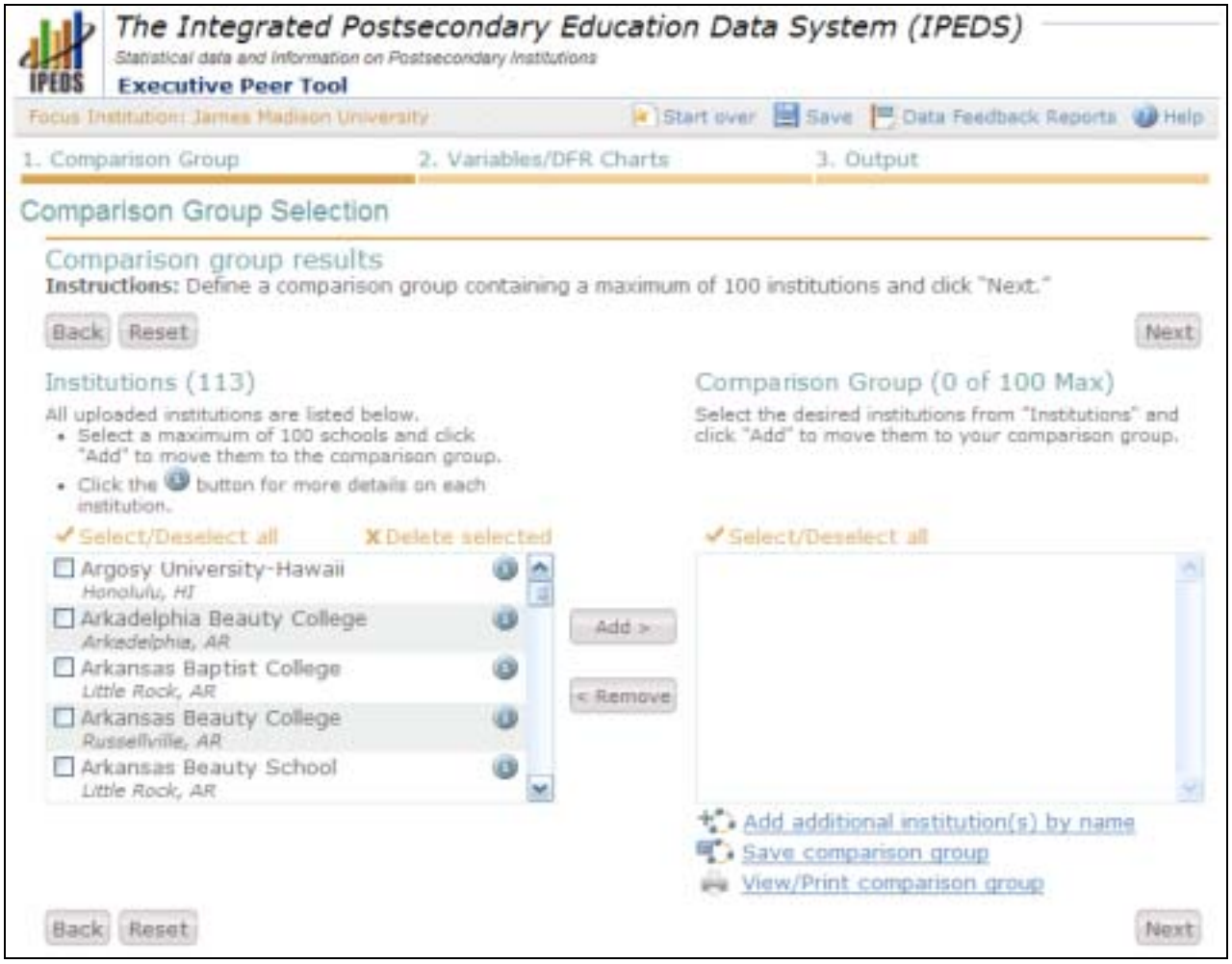


Results Page – up to 100 institutions

Selecting "Upload comparison group," whether you are uploading a file or are retrieving a saved list, will display your results on the "Comparison group results" page. If there are no more than 100 institutions in the list, which is always the case for lists created in the ExPT, all institutions in the list will be displayed in the right-hand "Comparison Group" box. To accept all of the institutions in that group and proceed to the next step, click "Next." You may also remove institutions from the list or add additional institutions by name before proceeding.



Selecting "Upload comparison group," whether you are uploading a file or are retrieving a saved list, will display your results on the "Comparison group results" page. If there are more than 100 institutions in the list, which may be the case for lists created outside the ExPT, all institutions in the list will be displayed in the left-hand "Institutions" box. Select no more than 100 institutions and click "Add" to move them to the right-hand "Comparison Group" box. Click "Next" to proceed if your comparison group is complete. You may also remove institutions from the list or add additional institutions by name before proceeding.

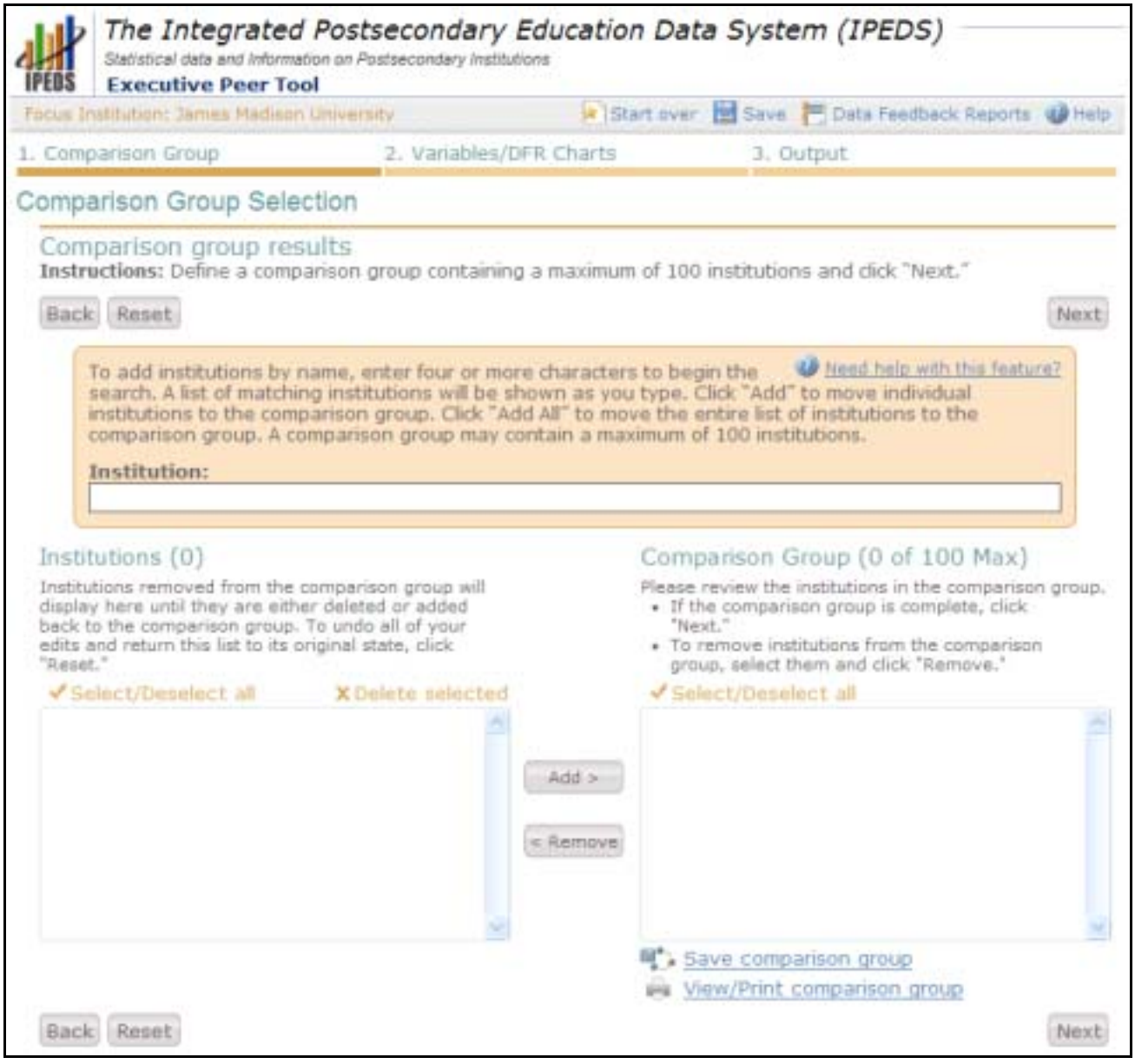


Add institutions by name

Overview

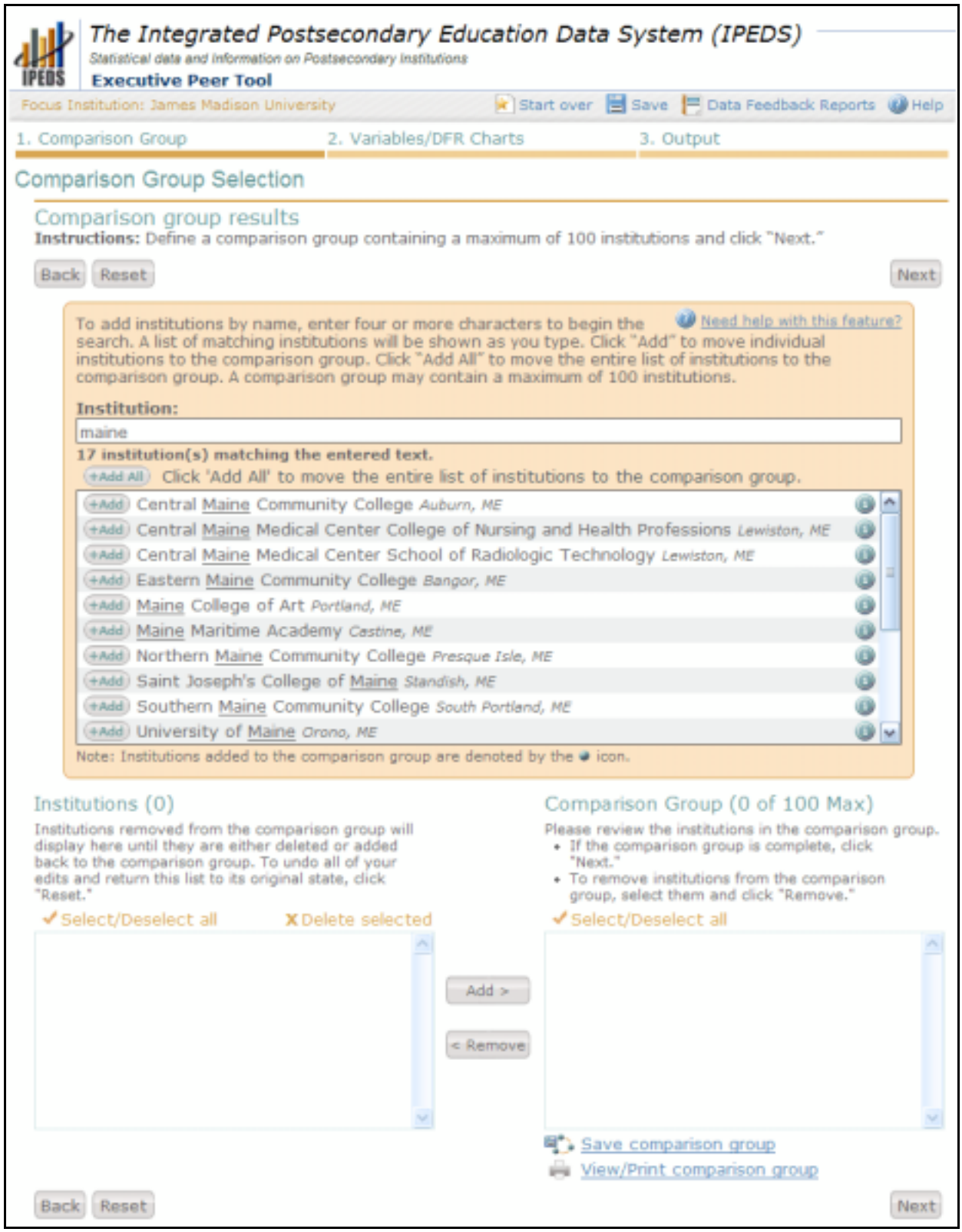
Define a comparison group containing a maximum of 100 institutions and click "Next."

To add institutions by name, enter four or more characters to begin the search. A list of matching institutions will be shown as you type. Click "Add" to move individual institutions to the comparison group. Click "Add All" to move the entire list of institutions to the comparison group. A comparison group may contain a maximum of 100 institutions.

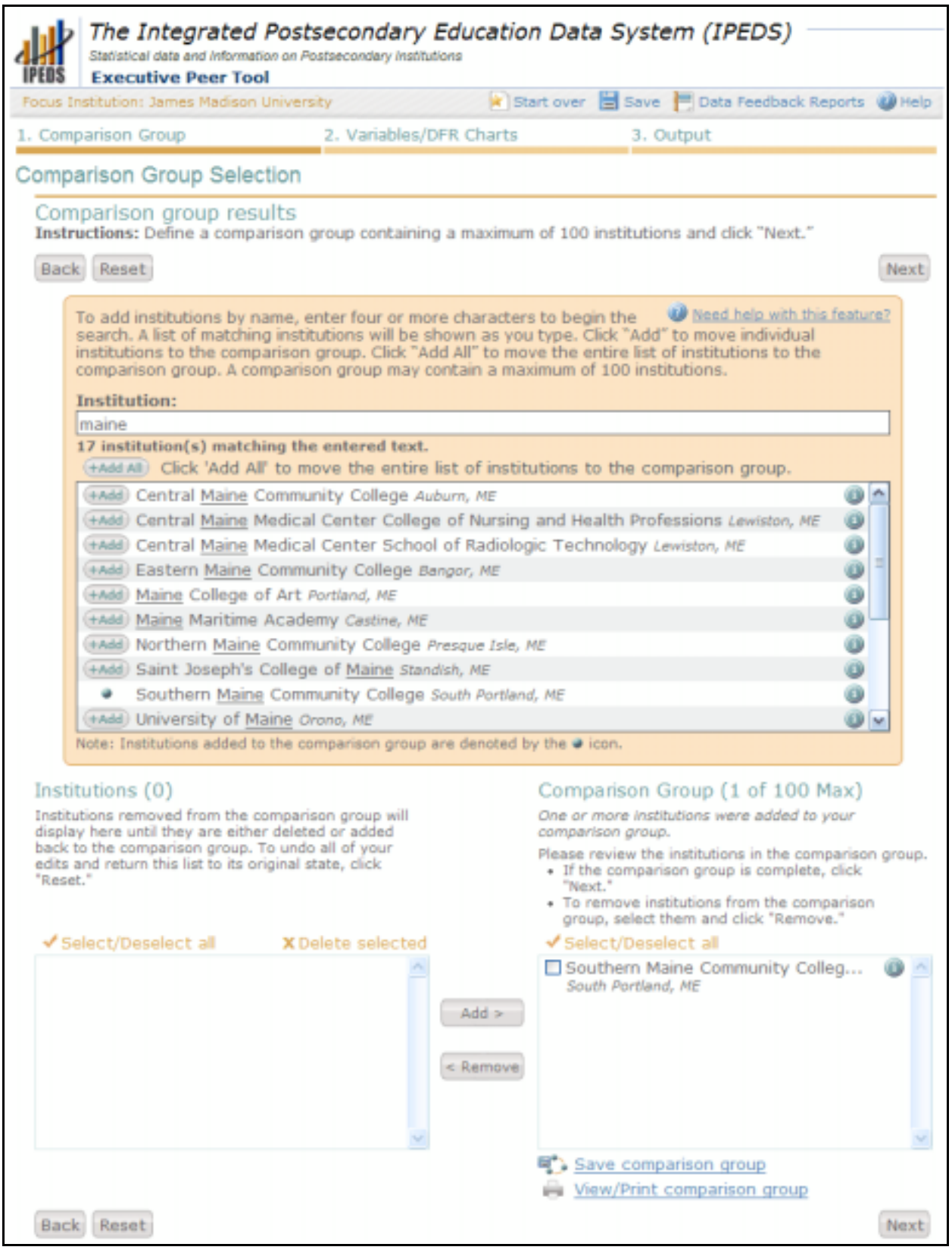


Add one institution to the comparison group

To add an institution to the comparison group, type the name in the "Institutions" box. Once it is displayed below, click the "Add" button beside the institution name. This will not be allowed if adding the institution will cause the "Comparison Group" box to contain more than 100 institutions.

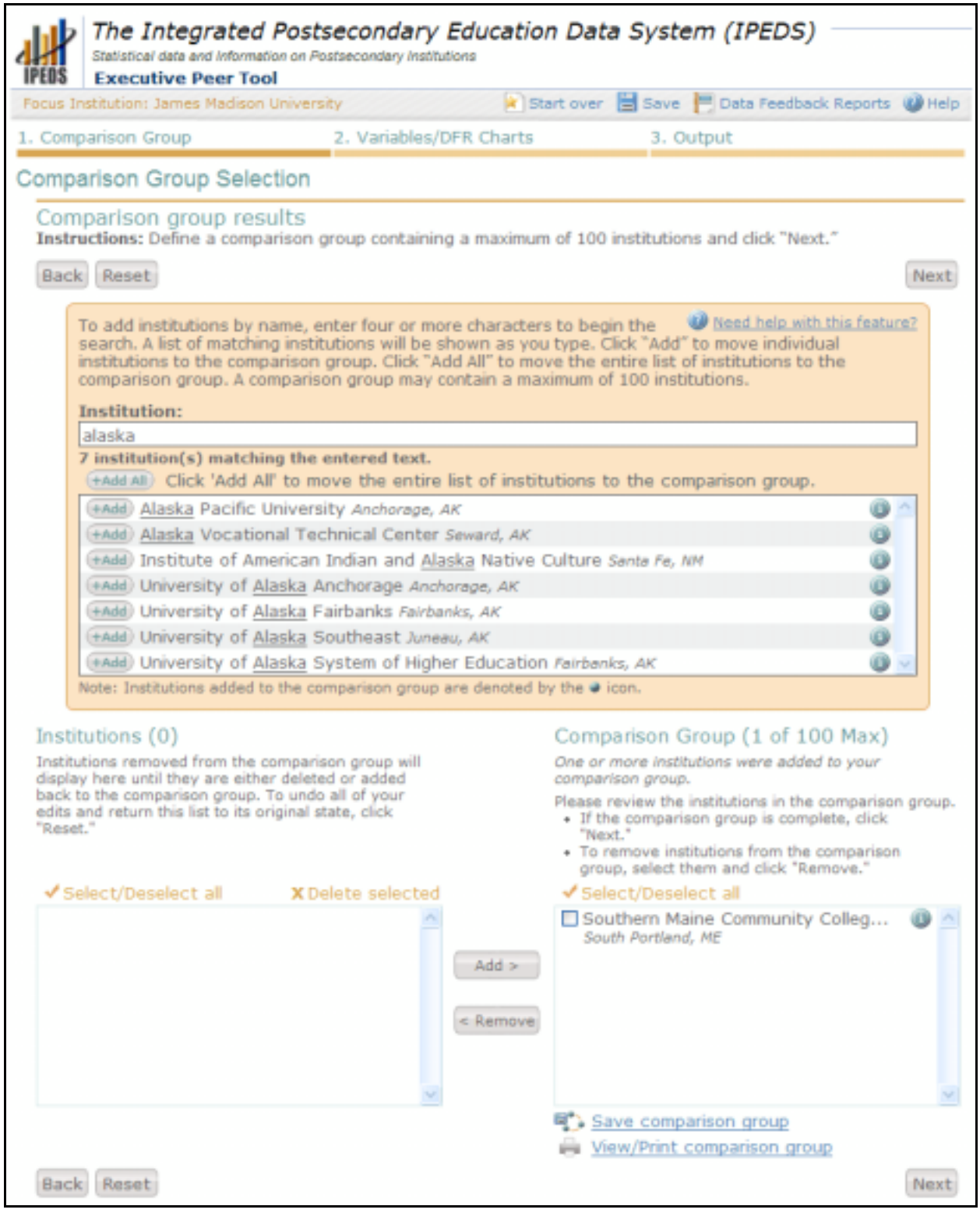


The added institution will display in the right-hand "Comparison Group" box and will display an (●) icon instead of the "add" button. You may continue to add more institutions to your comparison group from the same list or enter new text to find other institutions.

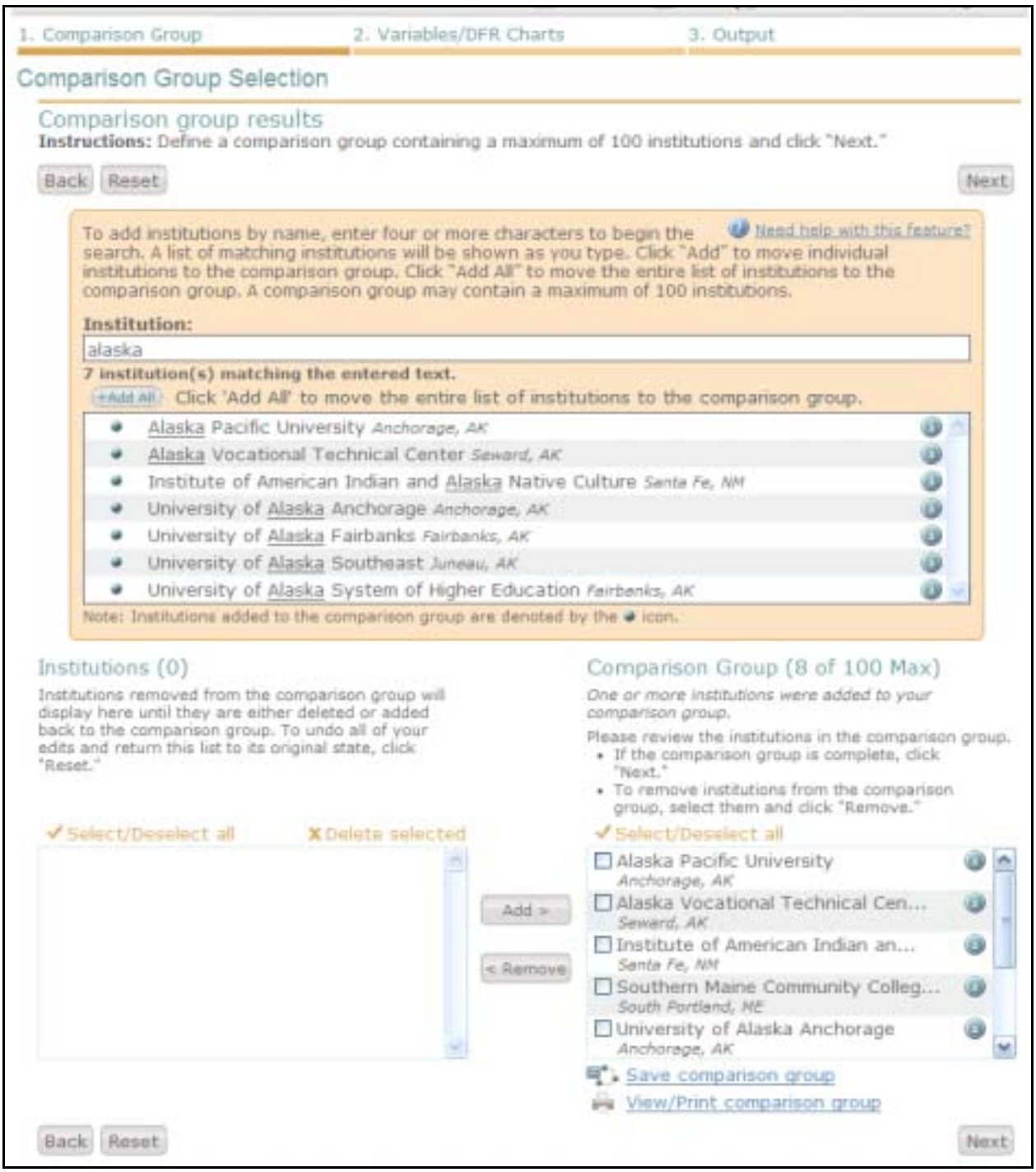


Add more than one institution to the comparison group

To add more than one institution at a time to the comparison group, type the common part of those institutions' names in the "Institutions" box. Once the institutions are displayed below, click the "Add All" above the list. This will not be allowed if adding the list will cause the "Comparison Group" box to contain more than 100 institutions. Please refer to the count of institutions matching the entered text as well as the number of institutions in the "Comparison Group" box to determine if your search must be refined before clicking "Add All."

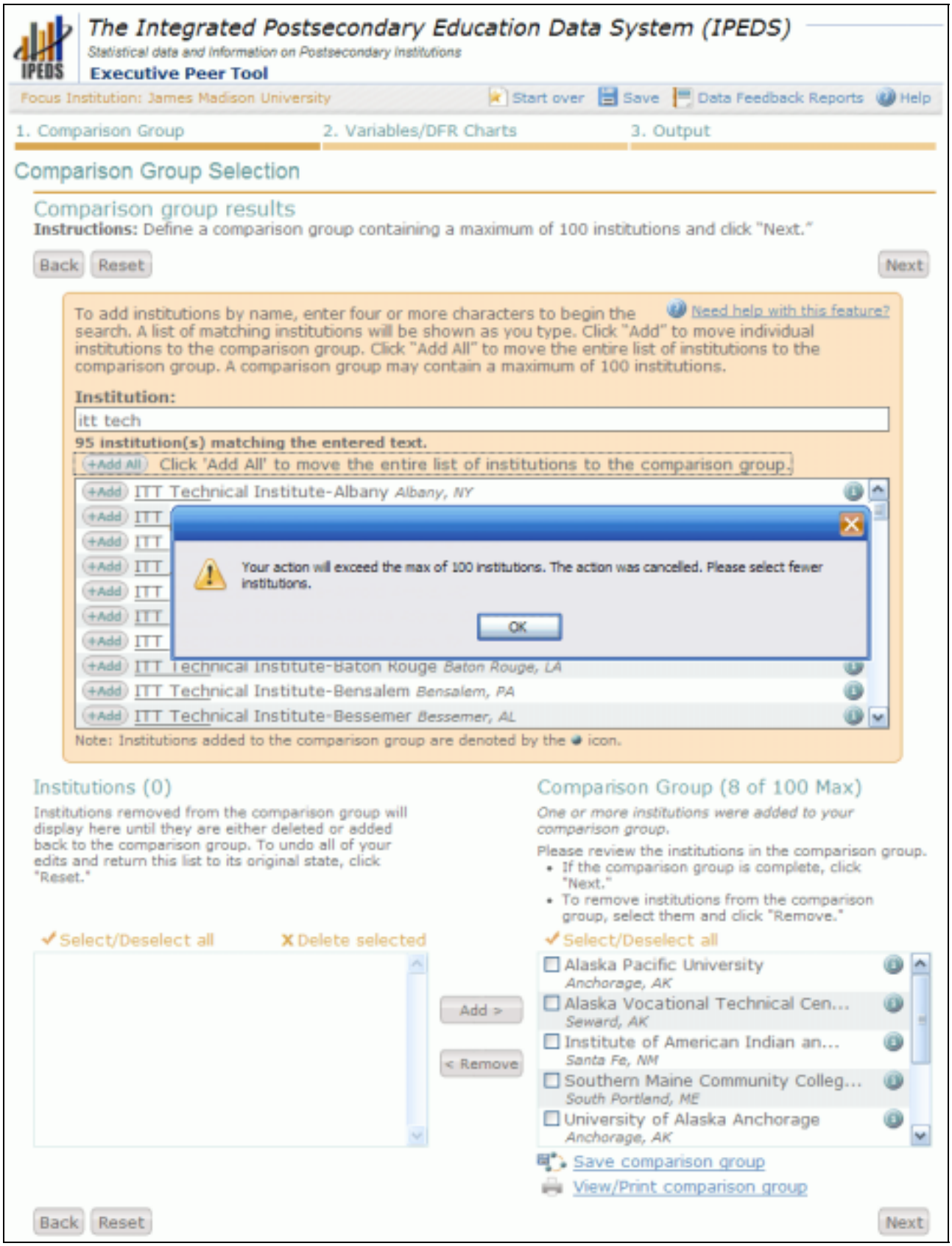


The added institutions will display in the right-hand "Comparison Group" box and each will display an (●) icon instead of the "Add" button. If you have not reached the 100-institution maximum for the comparison group, you may enter new text to find and add additional institutions.



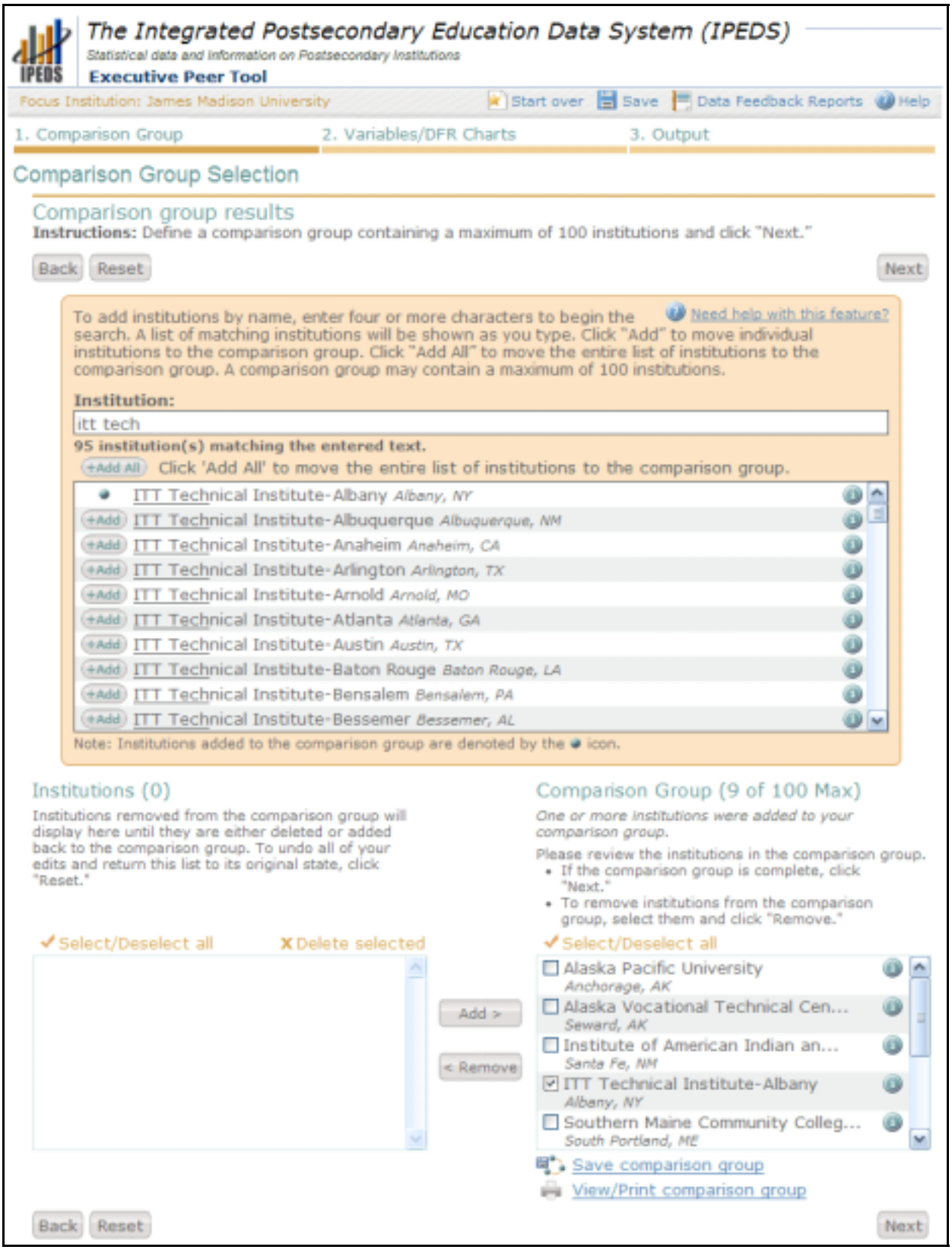
100-institution maximum

An error message will be displayed if you try to add a number of institutions that would cause the comparison group to contain more than 100 institutions. In this case, choose schools individually or enter more text to narrow your search results list.

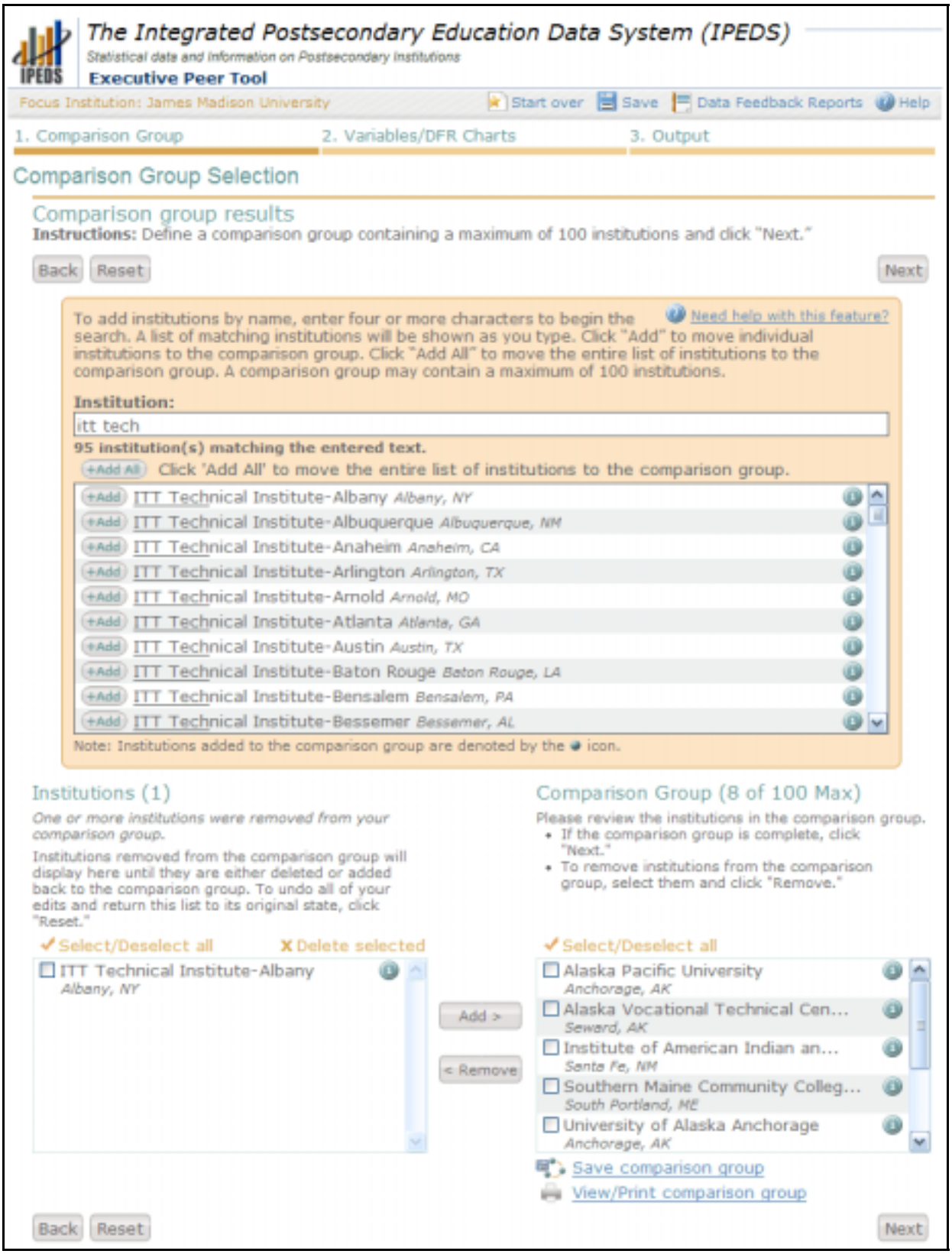


Remove a school

If you added a school to your comparison group by mistake, you may remove a school from the comparison group by selecting it and clicking the "Remove" button.



Institutions removed from the "Comparison Group" box are displayed in the "Institutions" box.



Add institutions by criteria

Overview

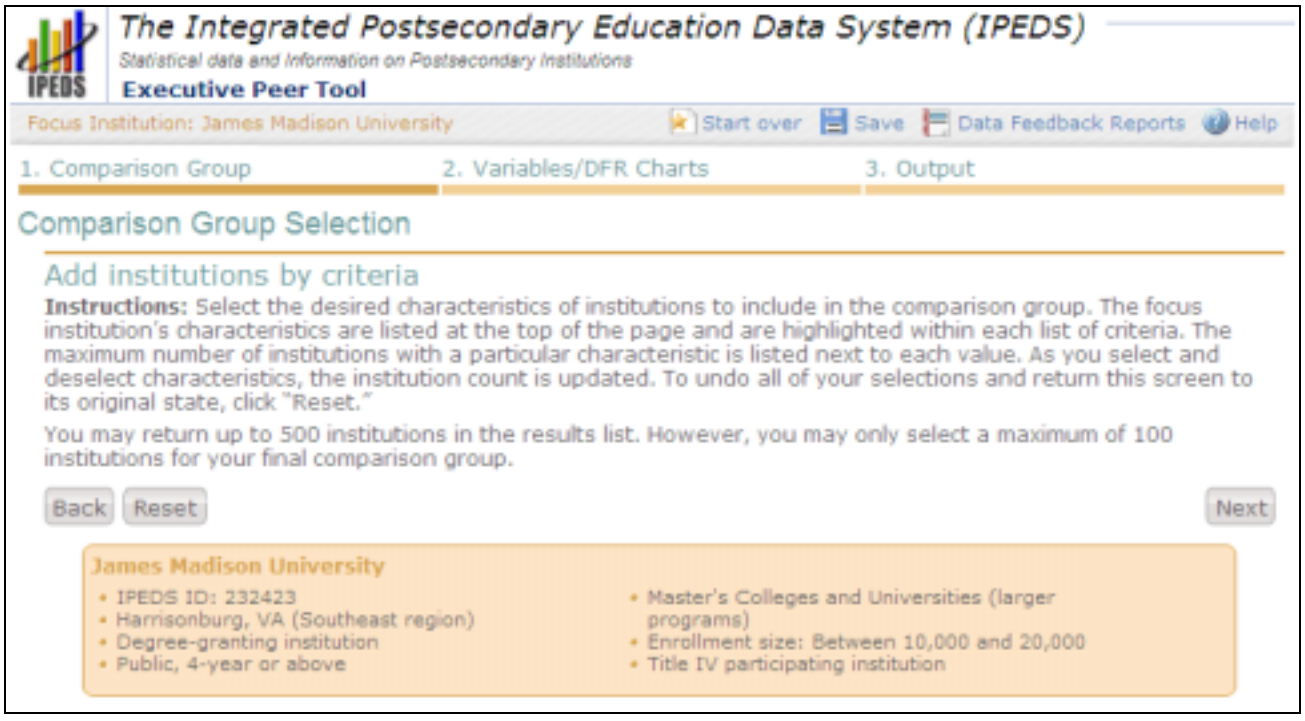
Select this option to add institutions meeting certain criteria to the comparison group. Available criteria include state or outlying area, degree-granting status, type of institution, size of institution, basic Carnegie classification, instructional programs by two-digit CIP code, Title IV status, or status as a Tribal college or a Historically Black College or University.

Focus institution criteria

The top of the page contains instructions and characteristics of the focus institution to help you select the relevant characteristics for institutions to be in the comparison group.

Select the desired characteristics of institutions to include in the comparison group. The focus institution's characteristics are listed at the top of the page and are highlighted within each list of criteria. The maximum number of institutions with a particular characteristic is listed next to each value. As you select and deselect characteristics, the institution count is updated. To undo all of your selections and return this screen to its original state, click "Reset."

You may return up to 500 institutions in the results list. However, you may only select a maximum of 100 institutions for your final comparison group.



Comparison Group criteria

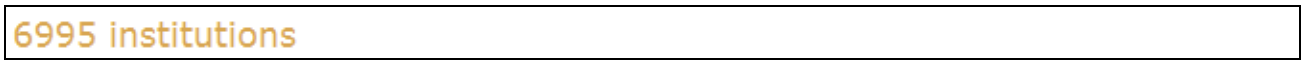
The bottom of the page contains the criteria available to define a comparison group. The characteristics of the focus institution are highlighted in each list of comparison group criteria, along with the total number of institutions matching each criterion.

As you make selections, remember that your final comparison group may not exceed 100 institutions. You may proceed to the "Comparison group results" page with up to 500 institutions, but it may be easier to reduce your list on this page.

Tips

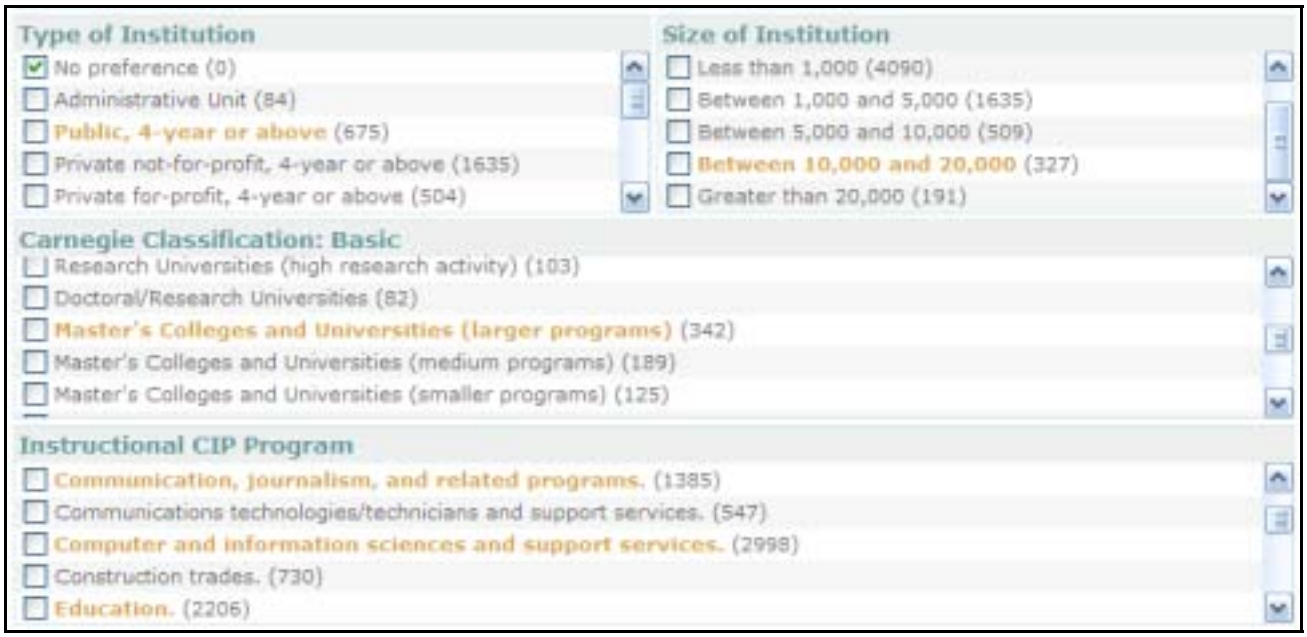
Use the map feature to select geographic regions.

Monitor the institution count displayed at the top of the page. Your final comparison group may not exceed 100 institutions. Although you may proceed to the "Comparison group results" page with up to 500 institutions, it may be easier to reduce your list on this page.



Observe the counts next to each criterion value to help determine your selections. These numbers represent the total number of institutions that match each criterion. As you select multiple criteria, monitor the institution count to see how the combination of criteria affects the results.

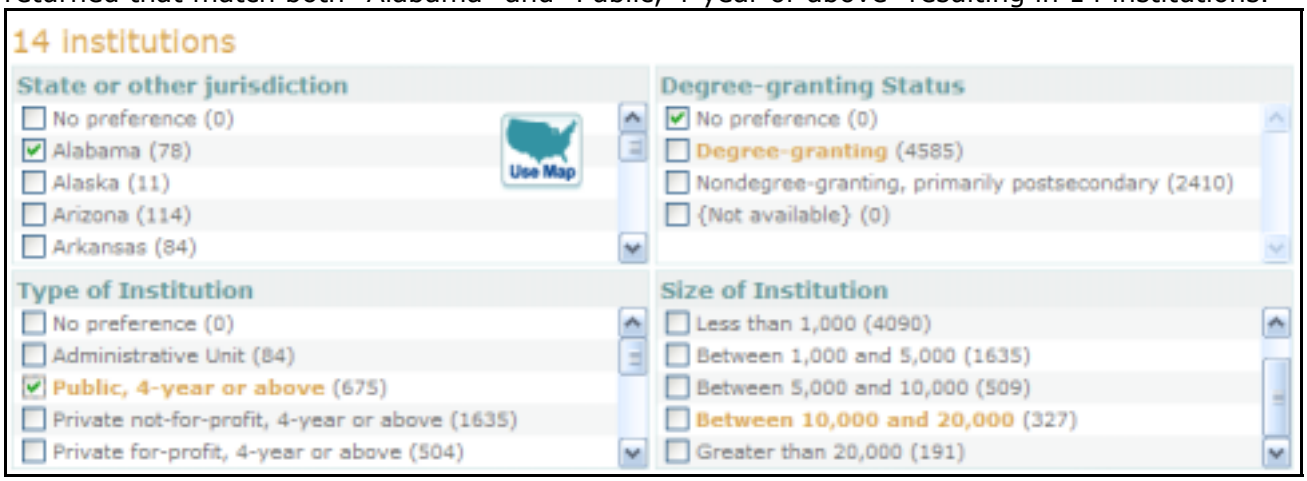
Characteristics identical to the focus institution are highlighted in the list of criteria. You may want to include institutions with the same characteristics, depending upon the purpose of your comparison group.



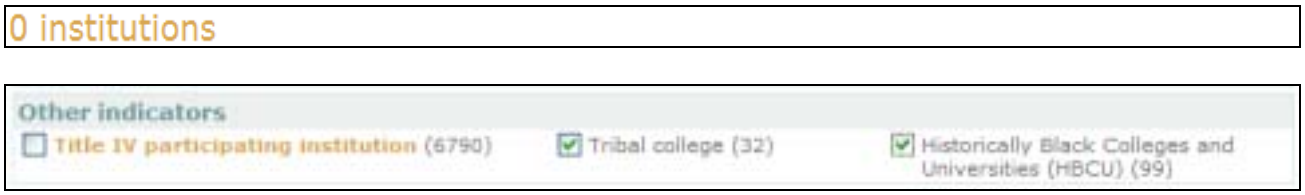
Institution count logic

When making selections from a single section like "State or other jurisdiction," you may use the counts listed to determine the total number of institutions that will be in the results. Results are returned that match either "Alabama" or "Alaska" resulting in 89 institutions.

When making selections from more than one section like "State or other jurisdiction" and "Type of Institution," the counts listed beside each criterion will only give you the maximum number of institutions possible, but the combination of the criteria will likely be smaller. Results are returned that match both "Alabama" and "Public, 4-year or above" resulting in 14 institutions.

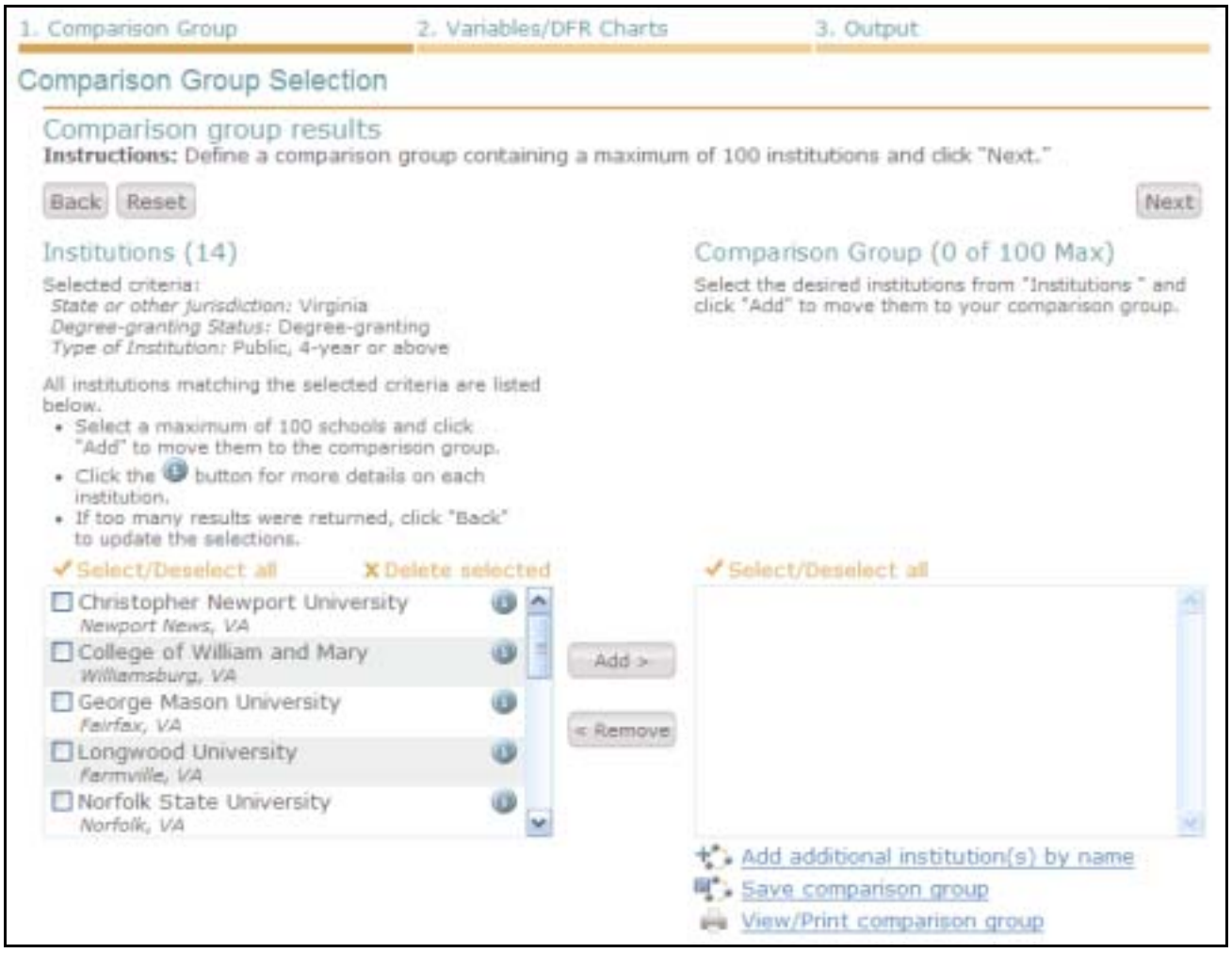


When making selections from the "Other indicators" section, keep in mind that each option stands alone and the results will be returned for institutions that meet all of the selected options. In this example, there are no institutions that are both "Tribal College" and "Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)."



The selected criteria shown in the example below results in 14 institutions.

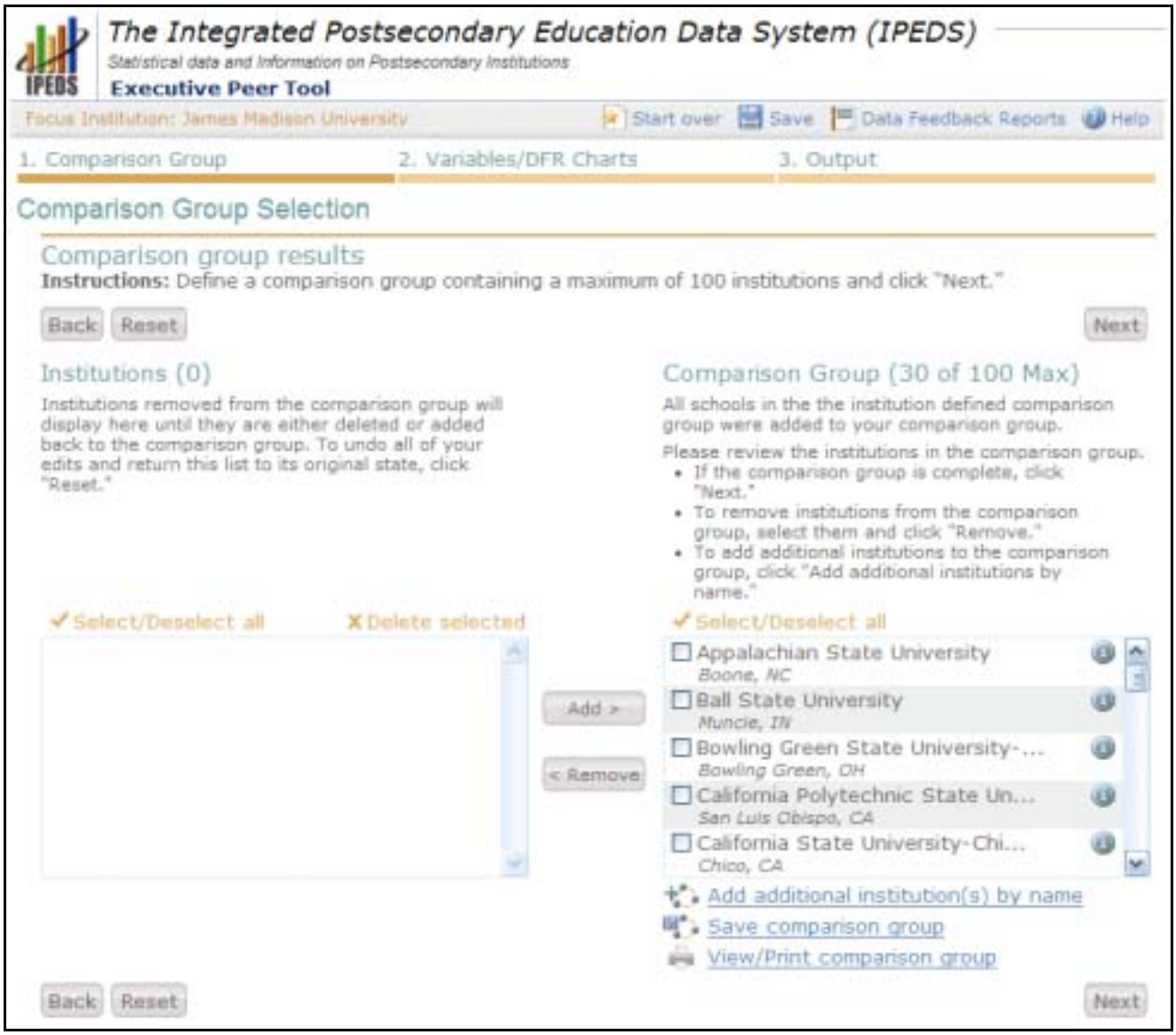
Clicking "Next" will take you to the "Comparison group results" page. All of the institutions matching the selected criteria will be displayed in the left-hand "Institutions" box. The criteria used to select those institutions is listed on the first view of the page for reference. Select no more than 100 institutions and click "Add" to move them to the right-hand "Comparison Group" box. Click "Next" to proceed if your comparison group is complete. You may also remove institutions from the list or add additional institutions by name before proceeding.



Comparison Group Results Page

Overview

The "Comparison group results" page has two boxes side-by-side: "Institutions" and "Comparison Group." Regardless of the method selected to create a comparison group, the results are displayed on this page.



Institutions box

Some of the methods used to define a comparison group will initially display the results in the "Institutions" box.

Any institutions selected and removed from the "Comparison Group" box will show here until they are deleted or added back to the comparison group, or until "Next" is clicked.

Any institutions in this box may be selected and added to the comparison group by clicking "Add." If the number of institutions to be added will cause the comparison group to contain more than 100 institutions, an error message will show prompting you to narrow your selections before clicking "Add."

Number of Institutions in the box. The number of institutions in the box will be displayed next to the heading "Institutions."

Instructions/Messages. Any pertinent instructions or messages confirming your recent actions will be displayed.

Select/Deselect all. The "Select/Deselect all" feature lets you quickly select institutions to add to the comparison group.

Delete selected. The "Delete selected" feature lets you clear the "Institutions" box if desired. Select any or all institutions to delete and then click "Delete selected."

Information Icon ( ). The information icon next to each institution provides additional information that may be useful in determining whether to include it in the comparison group.

Comparison Group (100 max) box

Some of the methods used to define a comparison group will initially display the results in the "Comparison Group" box. A comparison group may contain up to 100 institutions.

To continue to the next page in the application, the comparison group must contain between 1 and 100 institutions. However, to ensure more meaningful reports, a comparison group of between 10 and 30 institutions is recommended. Some variables will not contain data if fewer than 5 schools are used, depending upon availability in the IPEDS collection. These missing data are displayed as "N/A" on the reports.

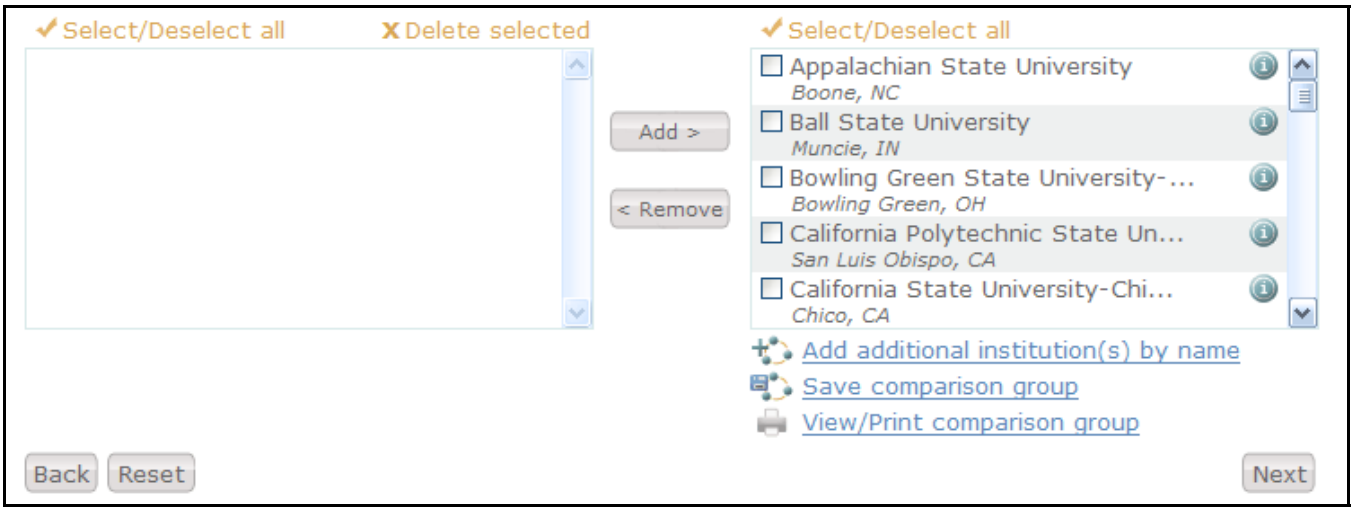
Any institutions in this box may be removed from the comparison group by selecting them and clicking "Remove."

Select/Deselect all. The "Select/Deselect all" feature lets you quickly select institutions to remove from the comparison group.

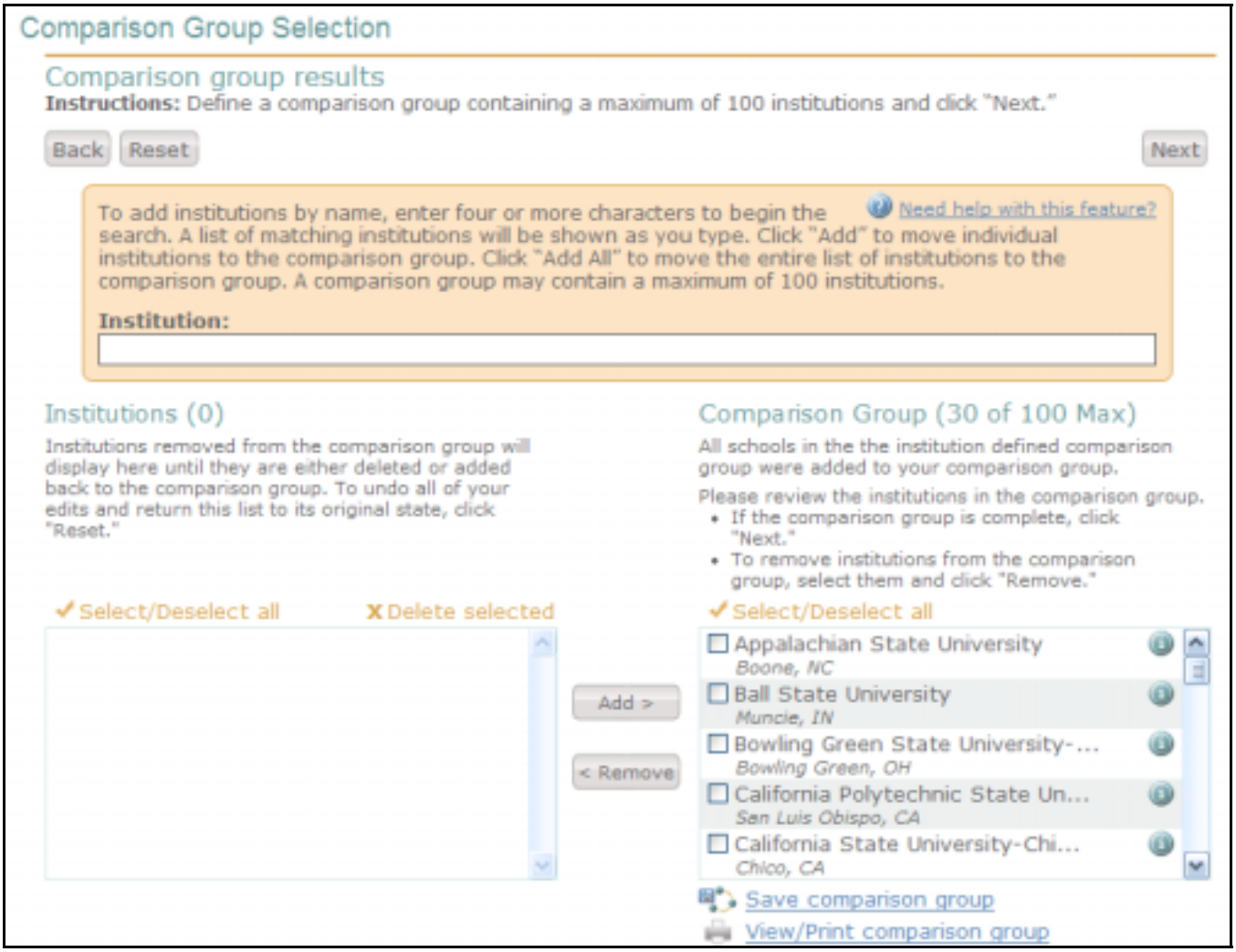
Information Icon ( ). The information icon next to each institution provides additional information that may be useful in determining whether to include it in the comparison group.

Add additional institutions by name

Regardless of the method used to define a comparison group, additional institutions may be added by name as long as the 100-institution maximum has not been exceeded. Click the "Add additional institution(s) by name" link on the "Comparison group results" page to use this feature.

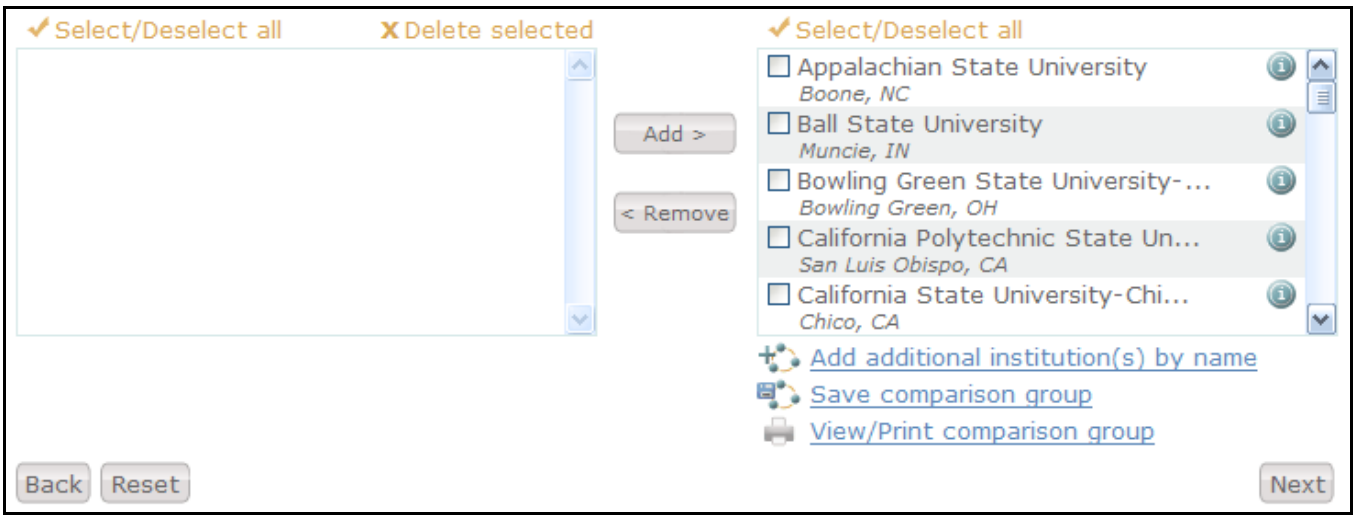


For details on using this feature, refer to the "Add institutions by name" topic under "Step 1: Comparison Group Selection" in this document.



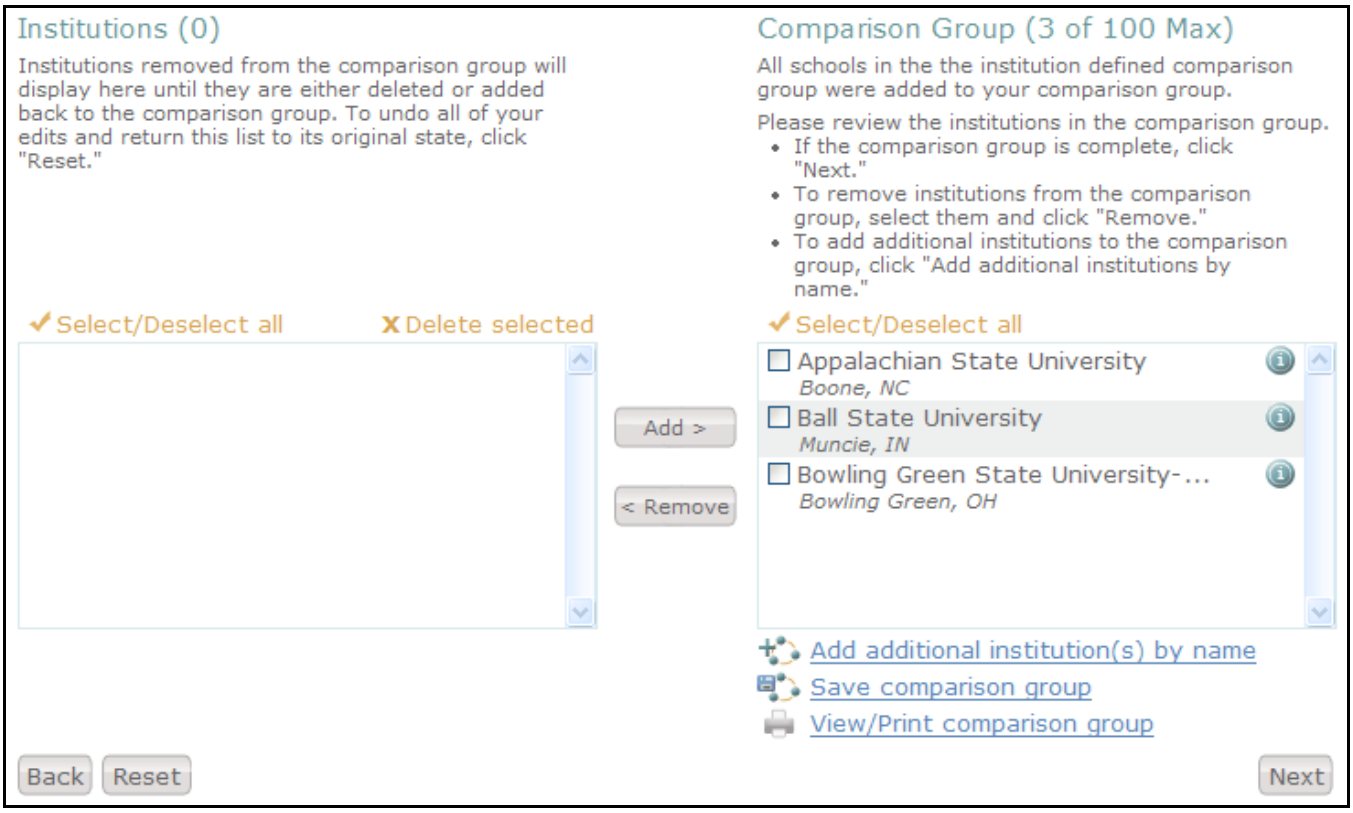
Save comparison group

The "Comparison group results" page provides another way to access the "Save" feature on the navigation bar by providing the link "Save comparison group." For more information, refer to the "Save" topic under "Site Navigation" in this document.

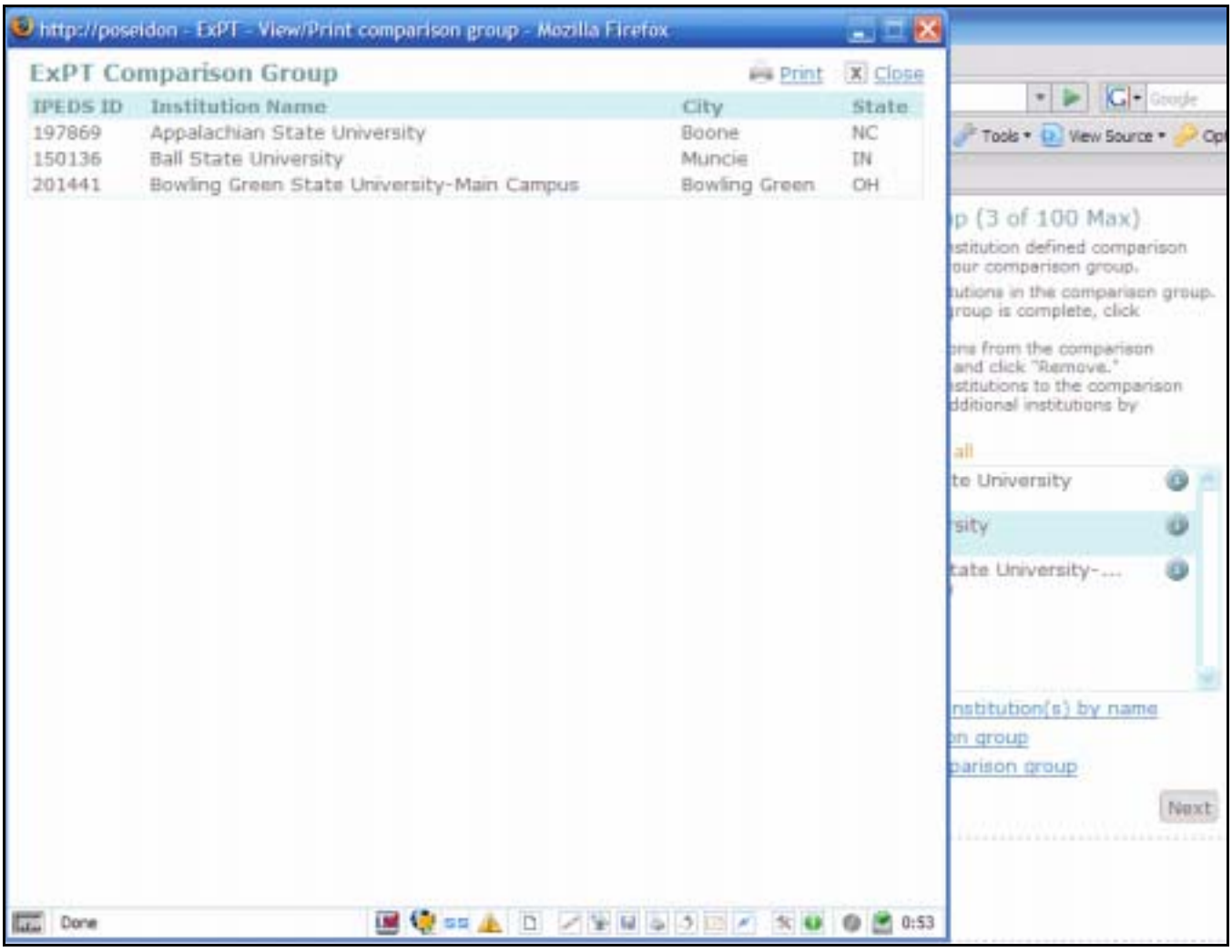


View/Print comparison group

To view or print the comparison group, click the link "View/Print comparison group."



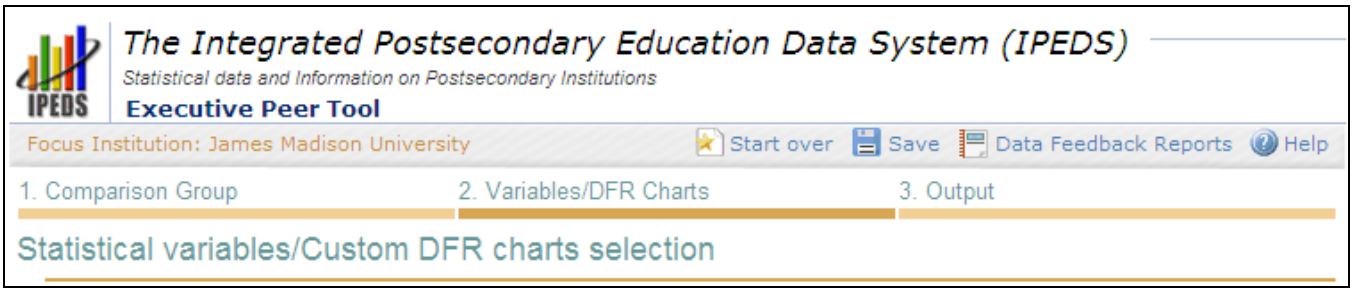
A new window will open showing all of the institutions in the comparison group. Click the print icon ( ) to print the comparison group.



Step 2: Variables/DFR Charts

Overview

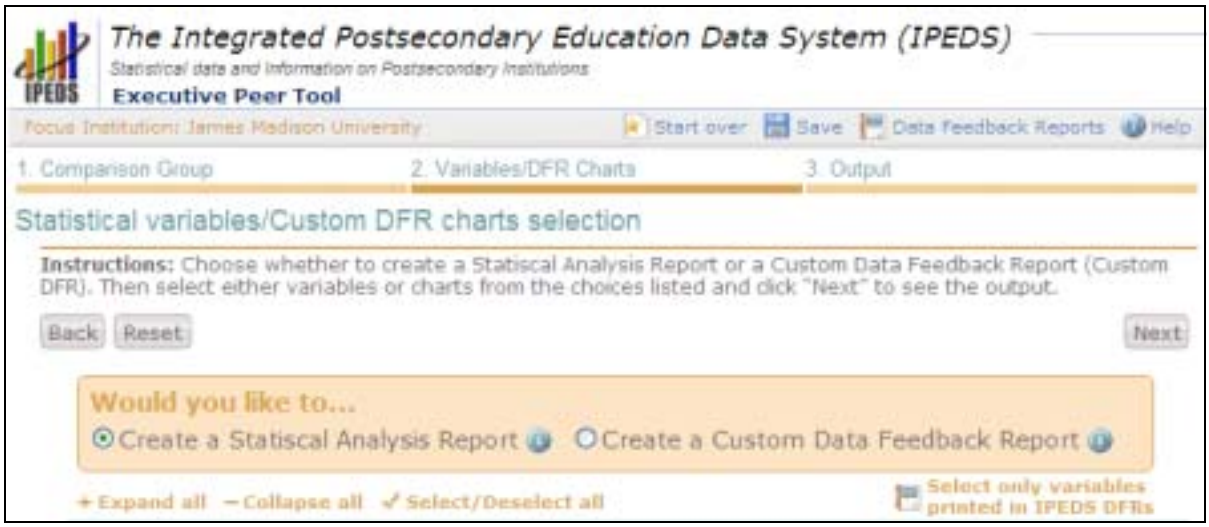
After selecting a focus institution, there are three steps to get results using the Executive Peer Tool (ExPT). Statistical variables/Custom DFR charts selection is the second of three steps. The step indicator bar shows an abbreviated step name and highlights the current step. Below the indicator bar, the full step name and applicable sub-step name are shown.



Selection

Overview

Choose whether to create a Statistical Analysis Report or a Custom Data Feedback Report (Custom DFR). Then select either variables or charts from the selections presented and click "Next" to see your output.



Create Statistical Analysis Report

Select this option to choose which variables to include in the online report. You will be able to view and download statistics, tables, and graphs of the selected data for the focus and comparison group institutions.

Create Custom Data Feedback Report

Select this option to choose which charts to include in the Custom DFR. You will be able to preview the selected charts and download a Custom DFR containing the methodological notes, footnotes, and sources for all charts as presented in the printed IPEDS DFR. Note: This option does not allow individual selection of variables within a chart, only the selection of whole charts.

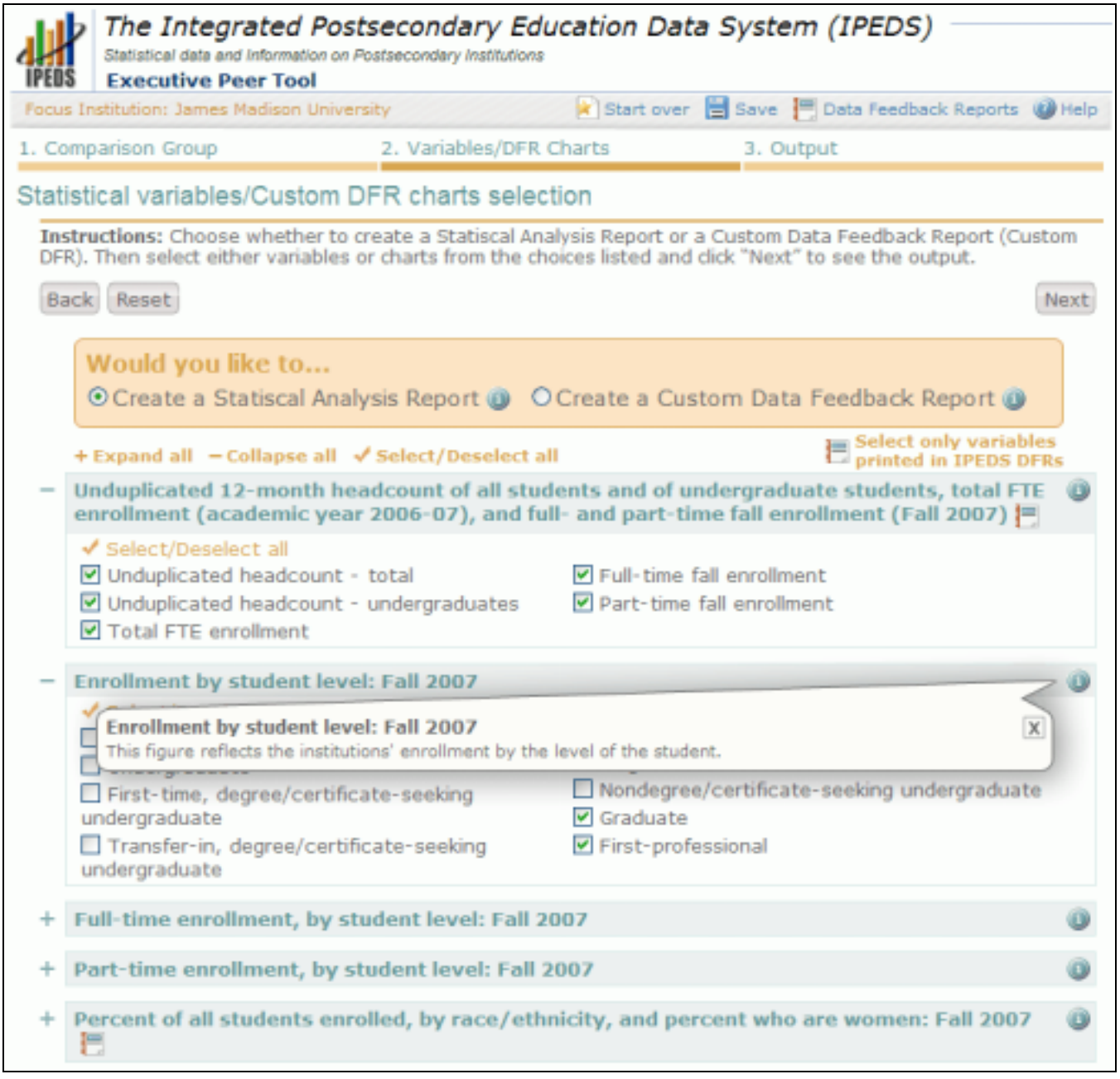
Create Statistical Analysis Report

Choose variables to include on the Statistical Analysis Report. Click on the information ( ) icon for details about each variable.

To select only those variables that were used for the printed IPEDS DFR, click the link provided. The DFR variables are marked with the ( ) icon.

To select all variables in a group, click "Select/Deselect all" in that group.

To select all variables in all groups, click "Select/Deselect all" at the top of the page.

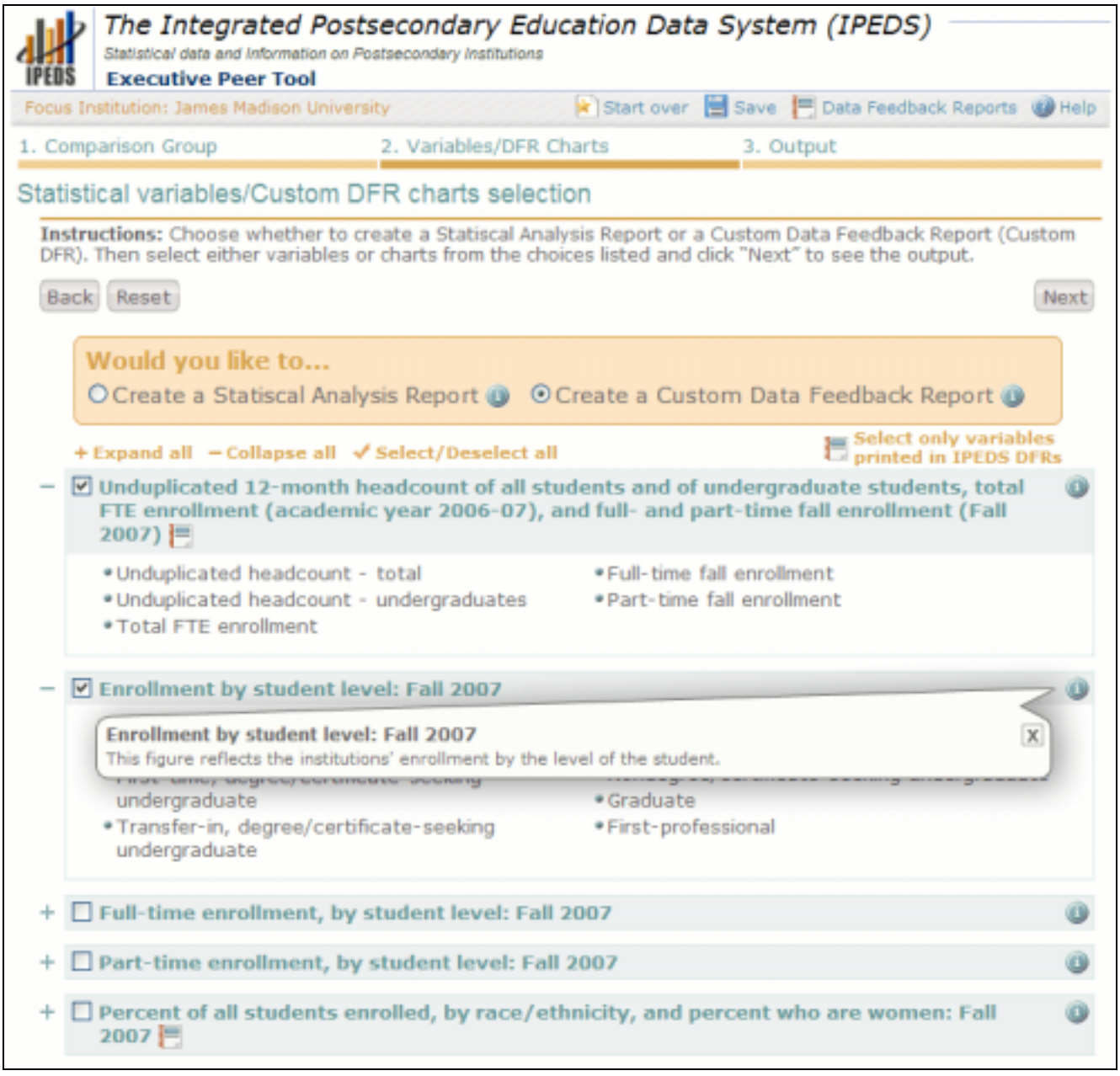


Create Custom Data Feedback Report

To create a Custom DFR, choose which charts to include. Click on the information (ⓘ) icon for details about each chart. You may not select individual variables with this option since the DFR charts include a standard set of data.

To select only those charts that were used for the printed IPEDS DFR, click the link provided. The DFR variables are marked with the (▤) icon.

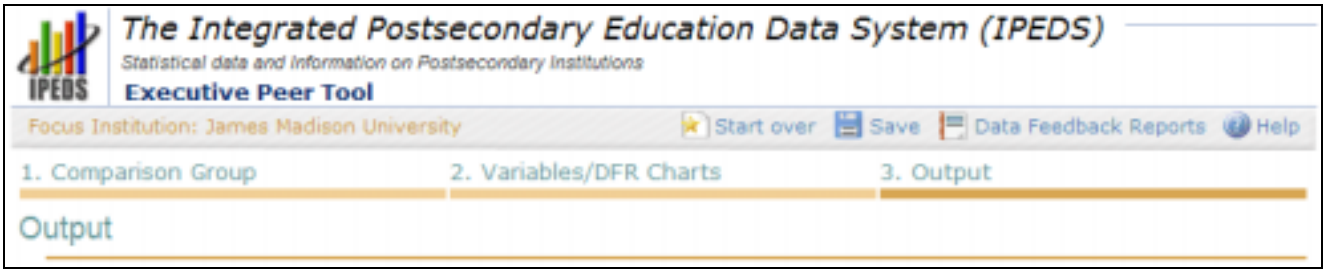
To select all charts, click "Select/Deselect all" at the top of the page.



Step 3: Output

Overview

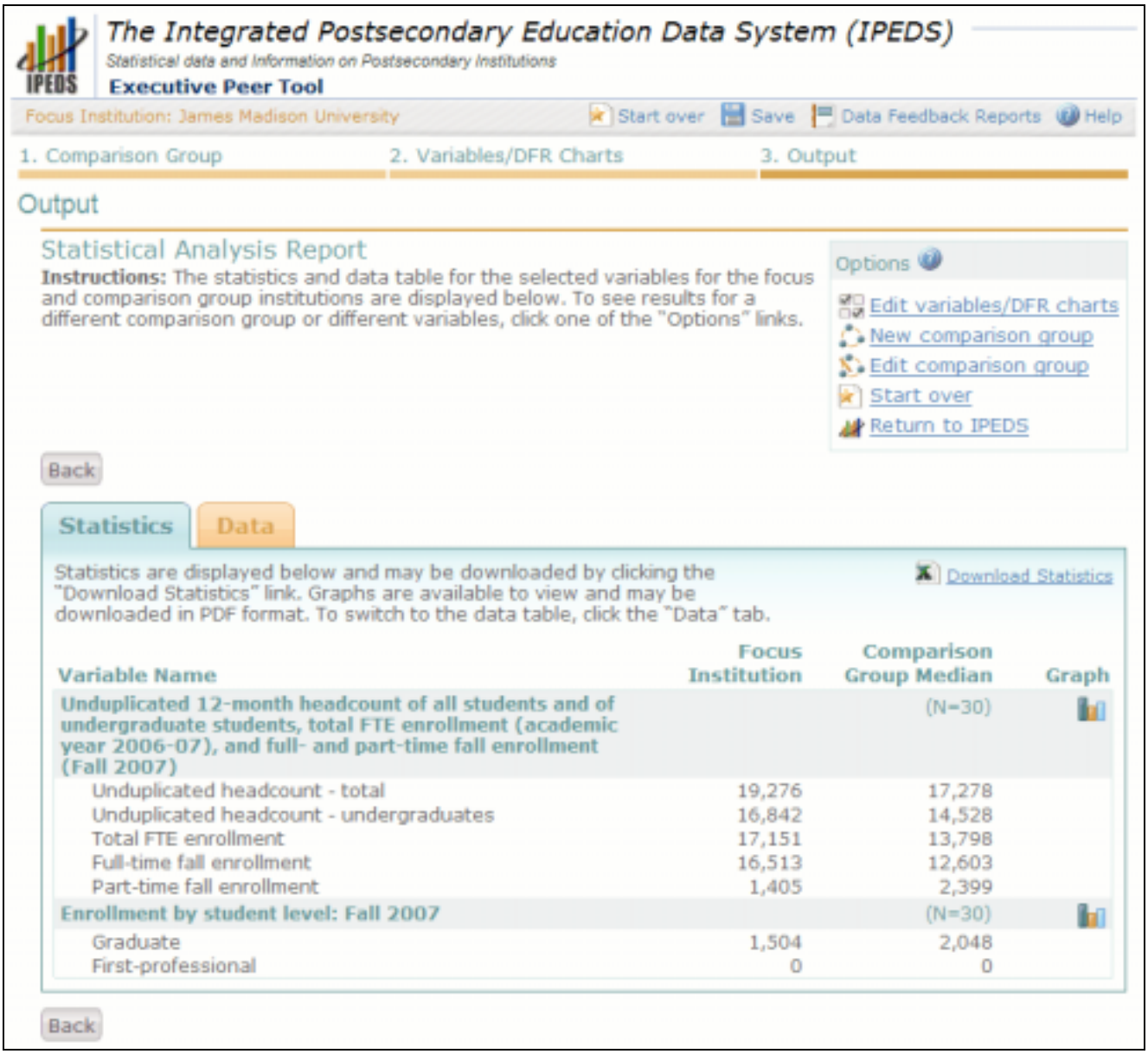
After selecting a focus institution, there are three steps to get results using the Executive Peer Tool (ExPT). Output is the final step. The step indicator bar shows an abbreviated step name and highlights the current step. Below the indicator bar, the full step name and applicable sub-step name are shown.



Statistical Analysis Report – Statistics Tab

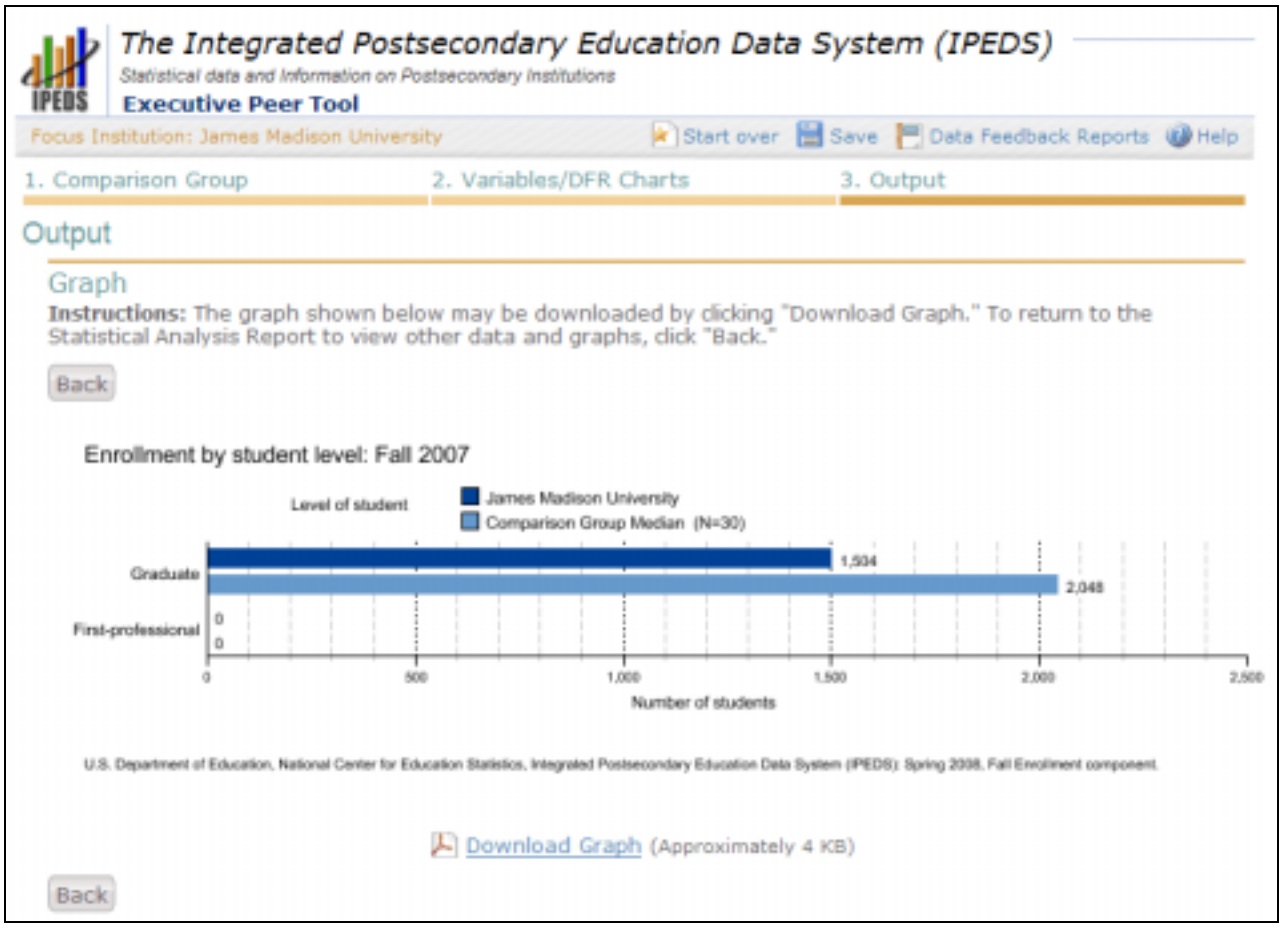
Overview

Statistics are displayed below and may be downloaded by clicking the "Download Statistics" link. Graphs are available to view and may be downloaded in PDF format. To switch to the data table, click the "Data" tab.



Graph

Graphs may be downloaded by clicking "Download Graph." To return to the Statistical Analysis Report to view other data and graphs, click "Back."

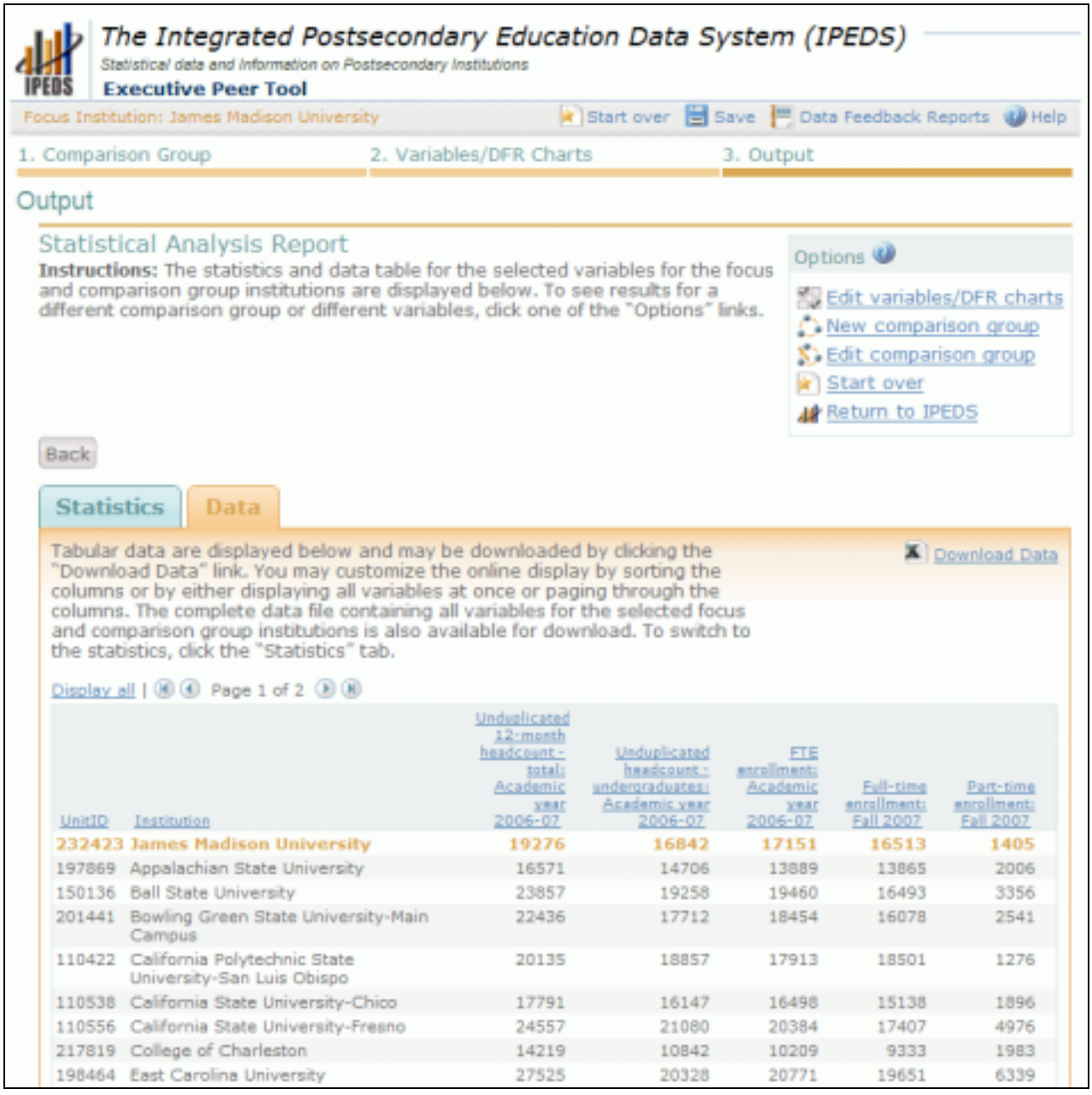


Statistical Analysis Report – Data Tab

Overview

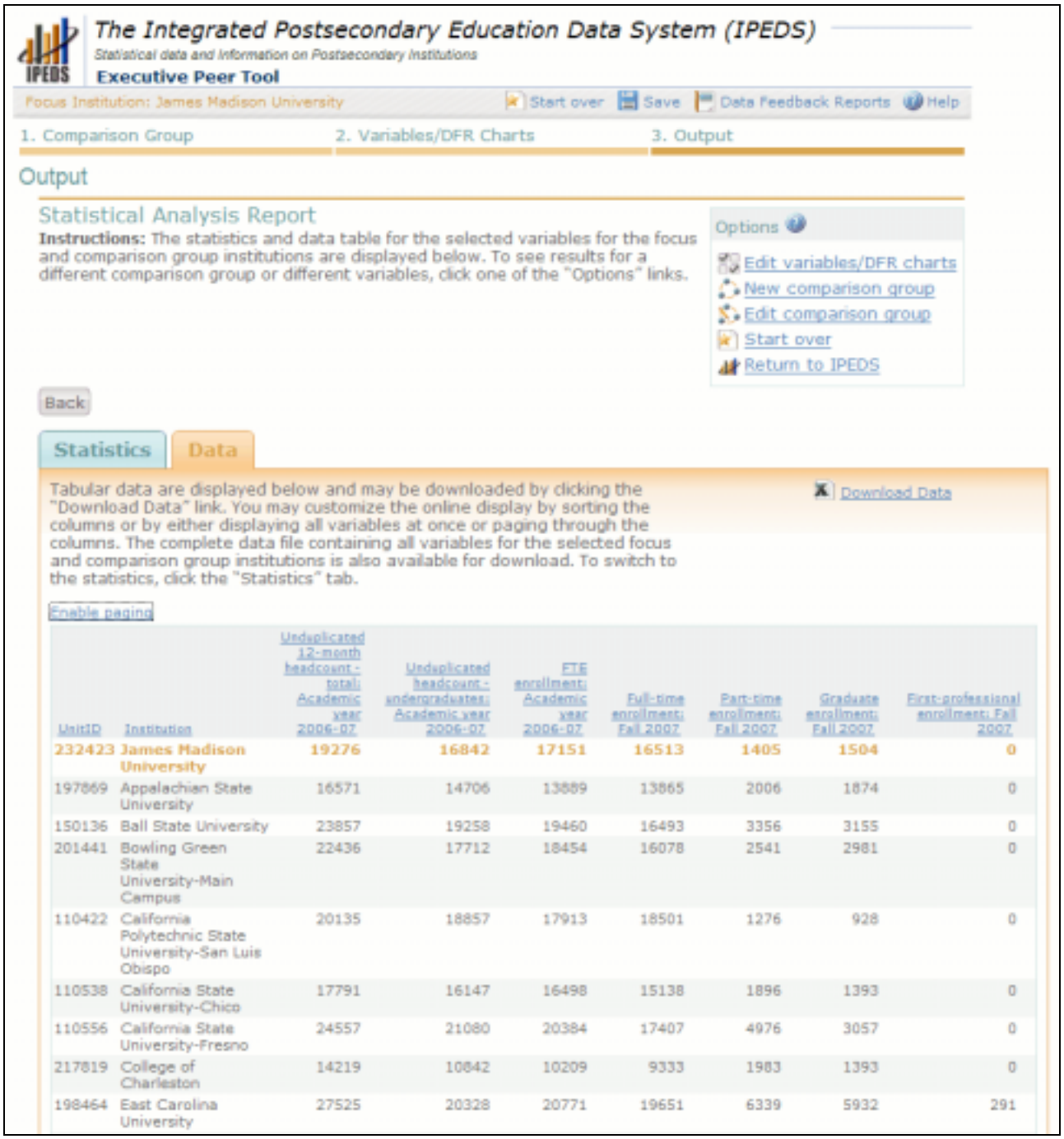
Tabular data are displayed below and may be downloaded by clicking the "Download Data" link. You may customize the online display by sorting the columns or by either displaying all variables at once or paging through the columns. The complete data file containing all variables for the selected focus and comparison group institutions is also available for download. To switch to the statistics, click the "Statistics" tab.

The focus institution data row is highlighted and the columns may be sorted.



Display All / Enable Paging

To view all variables on a single display page, click "Display All."
To avoid scrolling, click "Enable Paging" to click through multiple pages of results.

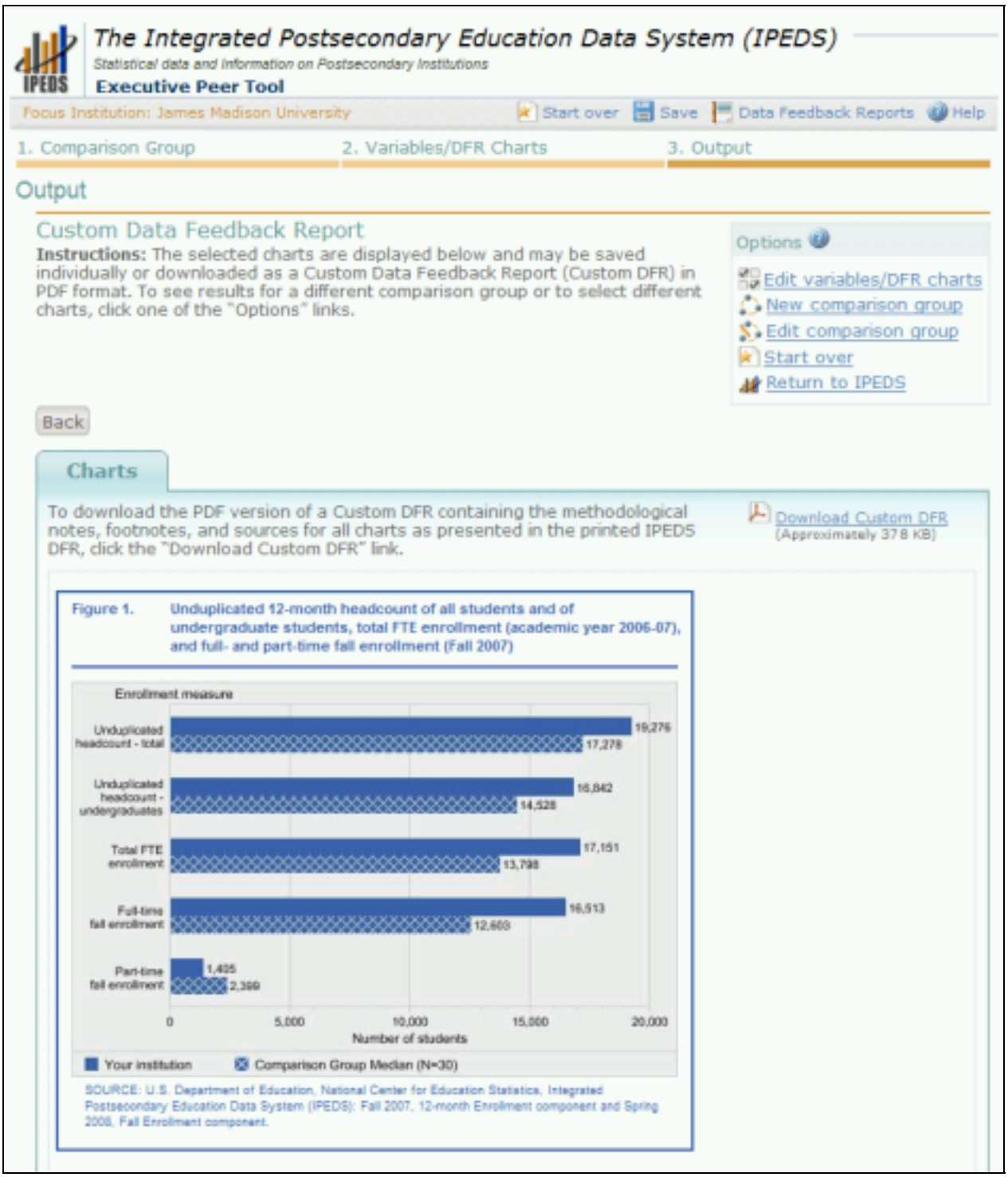


UnitID	Institution	Unduplicated 12-month headcount - total: Academic year 2006-07	Unduplicated headcount - undergraduates: Academic year 2006-07	FTE enrollment: Academic year 2006-07	Full-time enrollment: Fall 2007	Part-time enrollment: Fall 2007	Graduate enrollment: Fall 2007	First-professional enrollment: Fall 2007
232423	**James Madison University**	**19276**	**16842**	**17151**	**16513**	**1405**	**1504**	**0**
197869	Appalachian State University	16571	14706	13889	13865	2006	1874	0
150136	Ball State University	23857	19258	19460	16493	3356	3155	0
201441	Bowling Green State University-Main Campus	22436	17712	18454	16078	2541	2981	0
110422	California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo	20135	18857	17913	18501	1276	928	0
110538	California State University-Chico	17791	16147	16498	15138	1896	1393	0
110556	California State University-Fresno	24557	21080	20384	17407	4976	3057	0
217819	College of Charleston	14219	10842	10209	9333	1983	1393	0
198464	East Carolina University	27525	20328	20771	19651	6339	5932	291

Custom Data Feedback Report – Charts tab

The selected charts are displayed below and may be saved individually or downloaded as a Custom Data Feedback Report (Custom DFR) in PDF format. To see results for a different comparison group or to select different charts, click one of the "Options" inks.

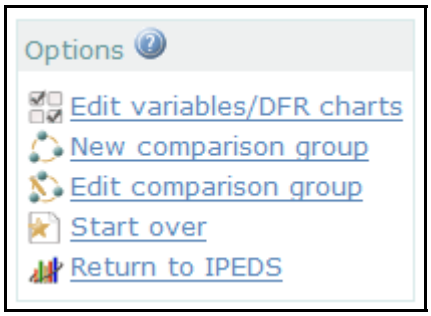
To download the PDF version of a Custom DFR containing the methodological notes, footnotes, and sources for all charts as presented in the printed IPEDS DFR, click the "Download Custom DFR" link.



Options

Overview

Several options are available from the output pages to change the output shown. Access these features in the "Options" box or from the top navigation bar.



Edit variables/DFR charts

To see output on different variables or charts for the same focus and comparison group institutions, click this link. After making your selections, click "Next" to be returned to the output screen.

New comparison group

To see the same output for the same focus institution and different comparison group institutions, click the "New comparison group" link. After making your selections, click "Next" to be returned to the output screen.

Edit comparison group

To review the current comparison group being used and either remove institutions from the list or add institutions by name, click the "Edit comparison group" link. After making your selections, click "Next" to be returned to the output screen.

Start Over

To use a different focus institution, click "Start Over" from the top navigation bar.

Previous selections of comparison group, variables and/or charts and output types are not retained and must be made again. This is required because the availability of comparison groups, variables, and charts varies with the selection of the focus institution. The purpose of the ExPT is to provide comparison data for a single school, not to create datasets for analysis. The user is referred to other IPEDS tools such as the IPEDS Data Center for this kind of research.

Return to IPEDS

Return to the IPEDS homepage if you are finished using the ExPT.

FAQs

Focus Institution Selection

Why can't I find my institution?

The name search looks for exact matches to what was entered. Enter key words for the name. The official IPEDS name of the institution may be different from how you are used to referring to it.

- If you are looking for the College of William and Mary, you may enter "William and Mary" but "William Mary" will not find the institution since the "and" was omitted.
- Make sure you do not enter extra spaces in the box. "ITT Tech" will not find any results; however "ITT Tech" will.
- Check the spelling of the entered text. Although a misspelling may return results because that institution submitted additional text to be searched, this is not typically the case.
- Acronyms may return search results, but are unreliable for finding institutions. If the acronym is at least four characters and was submitted by the institution as additional text to be searched, it may return results. For example, searching for "CVCC" will find both "Chattahoochee Valley Community College" and "Catawba Valley Community College."
- Has your institution name recently changed? Recent name changes may not be reflected in the ExPT.

"Custom Comparison Group"

The ExPT site was developed to show the content of the printed IPEDS Data Feedback Reports (DFRs). This section of questions is useful to institution officials interested in creating a "custom comparison group" that is applied first to the printed DFR and then to the content available in the ExPT application.

Other users of the ExPT should refer to the help topic "Step 1: Comparison Group Selection" for more information on using the ExPT to select a comparison group.

What is a "custom comparison group?"

The term "custom comparison group" is used to identify the comparison group created by an institution and submitted to the IPEDS Data Collection System (DCS) for use in the printed Data Feedback Report (DFR). The ExPT makes this option available for use as the "Use institution-defined custom comparison group" option.

This terminology should not be confused with the ability to *customize* a comparison group while using the ExPT to see reports with different institutions than were used in the printed DFRs.

Why create a custom comparison group?

Institutions that create a custom comparison group generally find the Data Feedback Report more useful.

Unless an institution creates and submits a custom comparison group to the IEPDS Data Collection System, NCES will automatically generate a comparison group for use in the printed DFR. This option is available in the ExPT as "Use automatically-generated comparison group."

This automatically-generated comparison group may not contain the group of institutions that would provide the most meaningful comparison to your institution on key indicators.

How do I create a custom comparison group in the ExPT?

Institutions who want to create their own custom comparison group for use in the printed DFRs may use the ExPT as part of the process.

1. Create a comparison group
    a. Use "Add institutions by name" if you already know which institutions you want in your comparison group.
    b. Use "Add institutions by criteria" to create a list of institutions with comparable characteristics to your institution. After generating this list, additional institutions may be added by name to complete your list if desired.
2. Save the comparison group
    a. Access this feature from the "Save" option in the top navigation bar or from the link provided on the Comparison group results page.
    b. Choose to "Save File" to your computer. Accept the default file name CGxxxxxx.uid where "xxxxxx" is your institution's IPEDS identifier.

You may exit the ExPT once you have created your file, or you may continue to see how the selected comparison group will affect reports.

Note: Comparison group files may also be created using other IPEDS data tools.

How do I submit a custom comparison group?

Each spring, IPEDS keyholders are notified when a comparison group file may be uploaded within the web-based IPEDS Data Collection System. Using that system, select "Tools" and then "Comparison Group Edit/Upload" to submit the custom comparison group for your institution. You may update it annually; however, this is not required. Once a custom comparison group is submitted, it will be used until another one is submitted to replace it. If your institution never submits a custom comparison group, NCES will generate a comparison group for you. This appears in the ExPT as "Use automatically-generated comparison group."

Why don't I see my custom comparison group in the ExPT?

Custom comparison groups are collected in the spring, but they will not show on the ExPT web site until October. The ExPT is based on the printed DFRs which are mailed to institutions in October of each year.

In the meantime, you may use the custom comparison group file uploaded to the IPEDS DCS in the ExPT to create a custom DFR against last year's data. In October, the new data with the new custom comparison group submitted in the spring will become available in the ExPT.

May I submit more than one comparison group?

Only one comparison group may be submitted to the IPEDS Data Collection System for use in the printed DFR. If you want to compare your institutions to different groups of institutions in each chart, you may use the ExPT to create these individual charts by selecting the "Custom DFR" option; however, all charts included within one custom DFR in the ExPT will use the same comparison group.

Even though only one comparison group may be used in the printed DFR, you may use the ExPT to create reports against as many comparison groups as you would like, not just to one submitted in the official IPEDS collection.

What's the difference between uploading in the ExPT vs. the Data Collection System?

You may upload a comparison group into the ExPT for use during that session. However, to upload a comparison group to be used on the printed DFR and for the "institution-defined custom comparison group" in the ExPT, the comparison group must be uploaded to the IPEDS Data Collection System (DCS).

Will using the ExPT permanently change the printed DFR?

No. Using the ExPT has no direct effect on the printed DFR which is officially prepared and distributed by NCES. Selections made in the ExPT affect the results generated by the ExPT.

The ExPT may be used to create a comparison group file that may be uploaded into the IPEDS Data Collection System which will be used in the next printed DFR. There is a global set of variables that are used for every institution to generate the DFRs; variable selections in the ExPT have no effect on the printed DFR.

Data Feedback Reports

How do I obtain a copy of my printed Data Feedback Report?

The ExPT provides links to several years of Data Feedback Reports (DFRs) for your focus institution.

To download the current year's DFR for your institution

1. Enter a focus institution.
2. Click the info ( ) icon next to the institution name.
3. Download the DFR from the link provided.

To download previous years' DFRs for your focus institution

1. Enter a focus institution and click "Select"
2. Click " Data Feedback Reports" from the top navigation bar
3. Download the desired DFRs for the focus institution

Reports

Why don't I see a median value for some variables?

In order to see a median value for the comparison group on the "Stats" tab, there must be a minimum of three institutions in the comparison group. Additionally, these institutions must both have supplied data for those variables. Click the "Data" tab to see the actual values.

New Features in ExPT 2008

1. The ExPT look and feel was redesigned to be even easier to use.
2. Information icons, callouts, and auto-complete textboxes were incorporated into the design.
3. The welcome page now includes include introductory text in addition to focus institution entry box.
4. The focus institution search was enhanced and simplified by showing matches as you type on the same page.
5. The focus institution's current DFR can be downloaded from the search results on the welcome screen by clicking the information icon next to the institution name.
6. The redesigned ExPT includes a top navigation bar. On the welcome screen, "Help" is the only option available.
7. After selecting a focus institution, the top navigation bar will include the focus institution name and the following options: Start Over, Save, Data Feedback Reports, and Help
    a. Start Over - allows users to clear all selections and return to the beginning of the ExPT process where a new focus institution will be selected.
    b. Save - provides easy access for users to save their comparison group institutions once they have been defined.
    c. Data Feedback Reports - provides easy access to printed IPEDS DFRs. Several years are available for the focus institution, and once a comparison group is defined, the current year is available for each of those institutions.
        i. NOTE: Data Feedback Report downloads (current year only) are also available by clicking the information buttons next the institution names throughout the site:
            1. On the Welcome screen in the focus institution search results box
            2. On the Comparison Group Results screen
            3. In the "Add institutions by name" search results box
    d. A context-sensitive help feature is consistently available from the top navigation bar. Depending upon your location when clicking the Help icon, the most relevant section will be shown. Help includes:
        i. A downloadable PDF of entire the help file.
        ii. A table of contents that is always available for easy navigation to other topics.
        iii. Information and screen shots about each step in the application.
        iv. Search tips and examples.
        v. FAQs.
8. The steps in the application were streamlined and are clearly represented by the step indicator bar at the top of the page. After selecting a focus institution, this three-step process includes:
    a. Comparison group selection
    b. Statistical Variables/Custom DFR charts selection
    c. Output

9. Two of the methods of peer selection were enhanced or redesigned
    a. "Add Institutions by Criteria" has several new features:
        i. Characteristics of the focus institutions are summarized at the top of the screen and highlighted within each box of criteria.
        ii. Static counts of the institutions matching each criterion are listed.
        iii. A running tally of the number of matching institutions is displayed on the page.
    b. "Add Institutions by Name" was completely redesigned. One search box is provided and results are immediately returned on the same screen as you type. You may add institutions one at a time, or add the entire list (keeping the comparison group count to no more than 100).
10. The Comparison Group Results page was completely redesigned and there is no longer a separate review page
    a. A running list of the comparison group institutions is shown on the right
    b. Individual institutions may be removed from this list
    c. Additional institutions may be added by name directly on this page so the immediate result can be seen
    d. The user is prevented from adding too many institutions (cannot exceed 100)
    e. The user can save their comparison group without leaving this page (the feature opens in a callout and will be available from the top navigation bar throughout the rest of the application)
11. The user can now toggle between the options to create a statistical analysis report or create a custom data feedback report and see how that affects the available choices: variables or charts.
    a. New feature: "Select only variables printed in IPEDS DFRs" – with one click, you may select either the charts or variables that were included in the printed IPEDS DFRs.
12. Output pages
    a. "New Comparison Group" – allows a user to see output for the same focus institution and variables/charts with a completely different comparison group.
    b. New feature: "Edit Comparison Group" – allows a user to edit the defined comparison group by removing individual institutions or adding additional institutions by name
    c. Enhanced feature: When viewing the "Statistical Analysis Report," instead of "Modify variables" the user may "Edit variables/DFR charts." In addition to being able to quickly change the variables shown on the output pages while retaining the selected focus and comparison group institutions, users may also opt to switch to create a Custom DFR report.
    d. New feature: When viewing charts for a "Custom Data Feedback Report," users may now modify the charts by clicking "Edit variables/DFR charts." They may also opt to switch to view a statistical analysis report instead.